The Hour of His Judgment

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PREFACE.

When the MS. of this book had been written, it was sent to an old friend, Mr. Charles Kelly, of Glasgow, for a friendly criticism. The careful scrutiny which he bestowed upon it, and the valuable suggestions which he offered, were deeply appreciated, and are gratefully acknowledged. It is hoped that the prayerful consideration of the Scriptural truths set forth in the following pages may stimulate God's people to "hasten unto the coming of the Day of God," and that it may thus be a help in preparing them to meet with equanimity the "day that shall burn as an oven."

Belfast, November, 1929.

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THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT.

Chapter I.

God's Purpose in Creating Man.

One of the strange features of our day, even with all its general enlightenment, is the spirit of unbelief in the Bible. The Bible itself has clearly foretold this condition. And some, seeking to find a cause, might think that it was entirely due to the downward tendency of sin, and sinful man's natural antipathy to righteousness. There are, however, other factors to be considered, and it would be difficult to prove that men are to-day so much more irreligious than they were in former times.

Men instinctively believe in their Creator. They are also ready to believe that He is loving, wise, just and all-powerful. If such is His character, would it not be reasonable to expect that He would give men a revelation of Himself, and of His purposes concerning them? In view of the self-evident

truth, that "No man by searching can find out God," such a revelation would seem to be absolutely essential. Men generally, therefore, are ready to believe that God has made this revelation of His will, and that it is to be found in the Bible. They also desire to have a very solid foundation for the faith that is in them, even though that faith be but dim.

This growing wave of scepticism, therefore, is not so much due to man's natural inability to believe, as rather to the fact that those who have been ordained by their fellowmen to study and make known the truths of the Bible, spend a large part of their time, not in *explaining* the truths of the Bible, but in *casting doubt* upon them. While this devastating work of the Higher Critic has embraced the whole Bible, it has been directed mainly against the books of the Old Testament, and more especially against the five books of Moses—The Pentateuch.

God's people have been accustomed to regard the Book of Genesis as a narrative of facts. We are now calmly told by a large number of commentators that instead of its being, in any reliable sense, an accurate history of the beginnings of the human family, it is largely composed of a jumbled mass of folklore, myths, legends and parables, out of which the astute commentator, because of his extraordinary wisdom and learning, is able to extract a few grains of truth for the benefit of the ignorant. And as the average man feels somewhat diffident in challenging the authority of those who seem to have so much ability and learning, the deadly work has gone on to such an extent that even the truthfulness of Our

Lord's own words has been challenged. And if doubt can be cast upon *His* words, what reliance can we place upon the words of those who confessedly are so far beneath Him.

The issue is quite simple. If the Bible is true, then it is to be devoutly believed by the man who desires a solid foundation for his faith. If it cannot be believed, then it must be discarded altogether, because it professes to set before ignorant men a way of salvation, which is indissolubly linked with the history of the human family. If that history is altogether untrustworthy, what confidence can we place upon its offer of salvation, and the various promises which God has made which are bound up with that history, and which are inherently connected with salvation?

The present writer not only believes the claims to be true which are made by the various writers of the Bible, but feels sure that the great majority of his fellow-men would also believe the Bible, if they were clearly taught the great truths which the Bible reveals. Surely nothing could have a grander effect upon the life of any man than an accurate knowledge of the character of God. And what could be of more importance to sinful men than a practical knowledge of the principles by which He is controlled, and how those principles must be applied rigidly and universally for the blessing and the well-being of all? Do we not all want to know, not only what God has done, and is still prepared to do for everyone, but also the transformation of character which must take place, before we each can receive the final approval of God?

God's purpose in creating man is thus clearly set forth :—" And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it : and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. i, 26-28.)

Now, from the sacred record, we can readily perceive that God's purpose was that men, collectively, should act as wise and good rulers over all the lower creatures : and further, that men, having the powers of procreation, should multiply until they filled the whole earth. And as they multiplied, and gradually extended the borders of the ideal paradise which God had first planted, the time would surely come when the whole earth would be " the Paradise of God." It would then be filled with a perfect and happy human family, living in concord with each other, and in obedience to the will of God. In other words, God's ideal for the earth was exactly the same ideal as saintly people form in their minds concerning heaven; with this difference, that the inhabitants of the earth would all be human beings. It was truly a noble ideal, and worthy of man's best efforts. It is not yet realised, but realised it surely will be.

And men and women, whether conscious or un-

conscious of God's ideal, are nevertheless working together toward its ultimate accomplishment. It is the privilege of every normal man to marry, and to institute a home. This he does in order that he may enter into a larger life through affection bestowed and received, as those entrusted to his care call forth qualities of mind which are latent, but undeveloped. These qualities, merely latent, can confer no pleasure; but when touched with life's experiences of joy and sorrow, round out and develop a character which otherwise might become narrow and self-centred.

Man is now sin-stained and imperfect. His faculties and feelings, now marred by sin and selfishness, were originally God-given, and even yet are to some extent a reflex of his Creator. To get a glimpse of the real fatherly heart of God, we would require to take all the best fathers and mothers we have known, and then, gathering up all their good points, multiply them by infinity. Thus should we see the natural disposition of the Creator toward all His human creatures : for God's purpose in creating man was to experience joy in *giving*. God is love, and His great heart of love could only find its joy and rest in an ever-increasing family of children, who both understood Him and loved Him for His own sake—because He is altogether lovable. Man, called into being by such a Creator, was to find his joy in knowing and doing the will of God, happily expressed in the well known formula, " Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."

Chapter II.

God's Judgment on Man.

The Test; The Failure, and The Verdict.

Having thus placed man in ideal surroundings, and with ample provision for all his necessities, God then put His creature under the law of obedience. Such a law of obedience to the will of the Creator is, of course, natural, just, and perfectly right. Many, however, may have wondered at the nature of the restriction imposed, and more especially, why God at the same time should permit a being of superior intelligence to so deceive the woman, that both she and her husband were misled from the path of strict obedience to the will of God. In reply it may be said that various reasons are set forth in the Scriptures, which fully justify the ways of God with men, and display His attributes of Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power so working together for the blessing and the eternal well-being of all, that the final result will be far beyond what the heart of man could ever imagine. (Rom. xi, 33-36.)

God's holiness makes sin an abomination. His love for all His creatures makes rebellion an abhorrence, not only to Himself, but to all His loyal and devoted children, who have learned the necessity and value of implicit and unfailing obedience to all

His commands. (Isa. lxvi. 24.) God knew that rebellion was already working in the heart of a mighty angel, Lucifer—for He knoweth the very thoughts of His creatures afar off. (Psa. cxxxix, 2.) And as there was only one *best* way for a God of infinite love to effectively deal with nascent rebellion in the hearts of His children, God took that best way.

We observe, first, that no creature can be judicially condemned simply because of rebellious *thoughts*, even although these thoughts might be extremely painful to the heart of a loving Creator, Who has the inherent power of discerning all things. Hence the necessity laid upon God that His child Lucifer should be placed in such a position as would compel him either to completely overcome his rebellious thoughts, or else be overcome by them. In the latter case he would, of course, no longer be regarded as a servant of God, but would occupy the position of an open rebel, and would naturally merit and receive in due course, the appropriate penalty.

We next observe, that by far the best way of giving a child a good opportunity for crushing rebellious thoughts which are latent, is to place him in a position of authority, and to put him upon his *honour*. The creation of Adam and Eve provided the opportunity. As they were both a "little lower than the angels," they both required a "covering cherub." And Lucifer was chosen for that most important service. He was placed over Adam and Eve. (Ezek. xxviii, 14.) And occupying such a position of authority and power over those committed to his care, and who were naturally very

susceptible to his influence, Lucifer had the golden opportunity of inspiring in their hearts a supreme love for their Creator, by inculcating an unfaltering obedience to all His commands. By so doing he would crush the rebellious spirit which was already working in his own heart. On the other hand, his position of authority over others gave him a favourable opportunity to give free course to all his rebellious thoughts. If he so desired, he could use his position as a lever to grasp still greater eminence. With the powers entrusted to him by God, might he not be able to secure for himself an influence and authority over the hearts of men, which rightly could only belong to God? Might he not become *as a god* to the hearts of men? (Isa. xiv, 13-14.)

The favourable opportunity thus presented was eagerly seized by a selfish ambition, which had now become the dominating thought in the life. Thus it was that Lucifer became Satan—Adversary—the enemy of God and "the prince of the power of the air," who "now works in the hearts of the children of disobedience." For God permitted him to deceive and mislead, not only the human family, but also a large number of the angels, many of whom have evidently found sin more agreeable than holiness. Thus it was that the Adversary became "the god of this world" and "the prince of demons." Through His servant Ezekiel, God thus describes His rebellious creature :—

"Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth ; and I have set thee : thou wast

upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuary by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." (Ezek. xxviii, 12-19.)

And through His servant Isaiah, God thus refers to the matter:—"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Isa. xiv, 12-15.)

If the query still persists, "Why did God permit Satan to thus deceive and mislead such a large number of His intelligent creatures?" we may reason out the matter thus:—The rebellious thoughts which were possible to the heart of Lucifer were possible to the heart of any intelligent creature. And since God is love, it naturally follows that He could only find a true response to that love in the prompt obedience of children who had the right and the power to choose, and who, in the exercise of that power, gladly decided to act in harmony with the will of the Father.

We know that God has given all His intelligent creatures such a right and power. And that being so, what better method could we find for ascertaining the actual condition of every heart than that of putting them all under a searching test of obedience? For a loving and whole-hearted obedience to the will of God could alone determine the worthiness of any creature to receive the blessing of everlasting life. And an All-wise God could so arrange the trial, and so prolong it, that ultimately every angel, as well as every man, would be brought to the point of decision. They would give—and that without any equivocation—a clear demonstration as to whether they would serve their Creator under all circumstances, or, on the other hand, by taking their own selfish course, they showed that they preferred the pleasures of sin. Thus viewed, we can see that God was in reality testing Lucifer, and through him, the whole intelligent creation.

The fact that God has thus far permitted Satan to act as a mighty one over angels and men is no

proof that God will permit such an evil condition of things to persist beyond a certain time. We have abundant Scriptural evidence to the contrary, which we will consider in its appropriate place. Meantime, we will confine our attention to the temptation of our first parents, and its tragic sequel.

In the temptation of Adam and Eve, the tempter craftily took his intended victims separately. He made a clever triple assault upon the heart of the "weaker vessel," who was more susceptible to his plausible falsehood. She was "beguiled"; her husband was not; but, believing that his beloved helpmate would certainly suffer death, he was placed at a great disadvantage. As the Apostle says, "Adam was not deceived"; hence his eating of the forbidden fruit was a wilful act of disobedience, which in effect implied that he preferred to die with his wife, rather than live without her. They were both, therefore, sentenced to death, and the sentence was executed by means of their expulsion from the Paradise of God.

So long as they were in Eden they had access to the "tree of life," and by eating of its fruit they could "live for ever." But from henceforth, having nothing better than the herbs originally given to the cattle, they would find it impossible to perfectly replace the daily waste. There would thus be a gradual weakening and decay of all the bodily powers, terminating at last in death.

And in "death" they would become as though they had never been. The penalty and its consequences are thus set forth :—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the

ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Although designed to live for ever, yet that was only possible on the natural basis of continual access to the fruit of the "tree of life," which fruit alone could meet perfectly their daily bodily necessities. Access being denied, death must be the inevitable sequel. Adam's death, therefore, was accomplished by his losing the favour and fellowship of God; by the earth being "cursed" for his sake, and by his inability to extract the proper nourishment for his daily needs out of the inferior foods on which he was compelled henceforth to eke out a precarious existence.

When the adversary deceived the women by his falsehood—"Ye shall not surely die"—he may have hoped that his dupes would be permitted to live on in the garden of Eden, for while there, in ideal surroundings and with a plentiful supply of suitable food, why should they die? Their bodies were perfect; they had daily access to the tree of life, and that perfect food, provided by God, could so perfectly replace the daily waste, that by the eating thereof they could "live for ever." The only vital difference would be, that, having come under the disapproval of God, the tempter could then secure for himself their homage and worship as the overlord of mankind. When, therefore, God pronounced the sentence of death, and took the necessary steps to enforce it, the tempter must have been bitterly disappointed at the comparative failure of his plan.

For Satan, like all others whose selfish ambition grasps at sovereignty, very naturally desired to reign, not over the *dead*, but over the *living!* The death of

those who were seduced into rendering him homage and worship, would be the very last thing that he desired. Satan knows, far better than the majority of his dupes seem to know, the absolute truthfulness of Eccles. ix, 5-6 :—"The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now *perished*." And the adequate reason is given in verse 10 :—"For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

The adversary shared the ultimate fate of all deceivers : he was himself deceived. He has also found it impossible to call forth the gratitude or love of those who have suffered under his selfish misrule. The ingratitude, godlessness and selfishness in his own heart could only breed similar qualities in the hearts of those dominated by his spirit. And thus it must continue, until "He whose right it is" shall "come and take the kingdom." Then will God fulfil His gracious promise in the fullest measure, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." And then will all men see clearly, that the tempter was indeed "a liar from the beginning."

They will also learn how the very attractive falsehood which Satan first presented to Mother Eve has been embellished in the course of ages. This he has successfully accomplished by using men of great intellect who had outstanding ability in the art of presenting beautiful and attractive philosophical theories. By the writings of such teachers he has carefully foisted upon the ignorant human family the

senseless theory that every man born into the world has an immortal soul. Thus it is that the "hope"(?) implanted by Satan's first falsehood has been sustained by the philosophical conception that "death" has two meanings which are diametrically opposed to each other. All men are aware that the body decays and dies, but—so we are told—that is only the primary phase of death, and is more than compensated for by the soul experiencing a life beyond the veil; the net result being that the ultimate gain is greater than the loss. The present writer is thankful that, by the grace of God, he has been enabled to discard the entire philosophy; but he must confess that he stands in admiration of the wonderful genius which invented it, and would certainly question the possibility of another lie ever being invented which will equal it, either in its beauty, or in its far-reaching effect upon the human family. It has certainly brought a great deal of comfort into the dull lives and frequent heartaches of Satan's toilworn subjects, and it was certainly very clever of him to gain an almost universal acceptance for what is really such a senseless theory. Even many of God's own people, who ought to know their Bibles better, persist in believing Satan's falsehood, rather than the infallible Word of their heavenly Father. Surely a senseless credulity could hardly be carried further.

It may here be briefly said, for the help of those whose minds have been greatly beclouded on the subject, that but few doctrines have been invented which were in more deadly opposition to the Gospel of the grace of God, which is revealed to us in the Bible. And it is, indeed, deplorable that even God's

own people should be so insensible to the masterly position occupied by Satan, in thus counteracting the effect of the preaching of the Gospel, through the almost universal belief in the inherent immortality of the soul. The Scriptures consistently teach that "the dead know not anything" (Psa. vi, 5), and further, that "God only hath immortality" (I Tim. vi, 16). Instead of teaching, therefore, that the dead are "more alive than ever" the one and only hope to be found in the Word of God is that of a "resurrection from the dead."

We now briefly refer to the Scriptural evidence that the sentence of death, passed on Father Adam, has been transmitted to all his descendants. Thus it is written :—"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v, 12.) As a natural consequence, the earth, instead of becoming a paradise of God, filled with a perfect human family living in harmony with each other and in perfect obedience to the will of their Creator, has really been a vast penitentiary, in which the various members of the condemned race, after passing a few years in labour and sorrow, pass away in death.

And even these few years, although lived under such conditions, are rightly esteemed by men as a great favour. Life is correspondence with environment, and men naturally endeavour to extract all the enjoyment out of their present environment that they possibly can. They clearly show, however, by the strength of their affections, aspirations and hopes, that they were originally created for a nobler

destiny than the death sentence which overtakes them. And the truth is, that when man's correspondence—communion—with his Maker received its death-blow by his act of disobedience, it tinctured all his other sources of joy with the dregs of sorrow and bitterness. Death intervenes, and breaks the sweetest ties that the present life can confer. For while it is true that " the dead know not anything," " the living " not only " know that they shall die," but they also experience the sorrows of bereavement. The following lines on " Death " from A. Bulmer's poem " Messiah's Kingdom " expresses the truth.

" From the fair light of day,
Thou bear'st thy trembling prey,
To the cold, gloomy caverns of the deep;
Where, o'er thy drear domain,
Silence and darkness reign,
And desolation and corruption sleep.
No cheerful sound is there,
No voice of praise or prayer.
Nor sun's meridian light,
Nor the pale fires of night,
Disperse the gloom
That shroud the tomb.
Nor thither bend the steps of spring,
Nor summer there alights, on blithe and roseate
wing.

Death! minister of heaven!
Into thy hand is given
The awful scourge of Justice; and thy stroke
Resistless must descend
Till time itself shall end:

Then, the strong pillars of creation broke,
At His tremendous word;
Thy captives all restored
Shall at the bar of their great Judge appear.
Till that dread hour
Thy tyrant power
Shall Adam's sinful race subdue;
Then, by a Mightier slain, thyself shall perish
too."

Chapter III.

God's Purpose not Thwarted.

Had God's purpose, to have a human family large enough to fill the whole earth, been definitely thwarted, either by the cunning and strategy of the adversary on the one hand, or by the folly and simplicity of man on the other, so that no useful lesson could have been given to angels and men by the exhibition of the human family coming under the sentence of death, with all its entail of suffering and heartache, we may reasonably believe that God would have destroyed all rebellion at its first manifestation. He would thus have set before all His creatures an example of a wise jurisdiction, which people of all degrees of intelligence and in all the ages of history would have regarded as the only way of effectively dealing with open rebellion within the realm. But the Creator, having more wisdom and more power than any of His creatures, not to speak of more *love*, knew that *He* could overrule the reign of sin and death to the very best advantage of all His creatures, and that without exception. Therefore, instead of doing what any human ruler would

have done, He permitted His open adversary to maintain his position as "the god of this world," and also to control a large number of the fallen angels—demons—in the carrying out of his selfish and hateful purposes against the weak, ignorant, and imperfect human family.

This seeming weakness on the part of God must have been a great test to many of the angels who have remained loyal to their Creator. How often they must have witnessed scenes of cruelty and wrong, causing their hearts to burn with righteous indignation! And as they could only intervene in harmony with the will of their Creator, what a wealth of patience they have been called upon to exhibit toward the various members of the human family—not only with sinners, but also with saints! —with sinners as they proceeded to greater wickedness in self-willed presumption, and with saints in their many hours of weakness and discouragement. For the open rebellion in His family has given the Creator an opportunity of exhibiting His real, inner character, in a way altogether impossible in a realm where sin had never entered. And the lesson thus imparted concerning the true character of God will surely never be lost.

Knowing the end from the beginning, God has permitted a large measure of liberty to all His intelligent creatures, because *He* can make even "the wrath of man to praise Him" (Psa. lxxvi, 10), so that all His creatures, whether loyal or rebellious, can be made to work out His gracious purposes, which are designed for the blessing and the eternal well-being of all.

That God's ultimate purpose has not been thwarted is clearly shown from the penalty He imposed on the serpent :—" And I will put enmity between thee and the women, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii, 15.) The sentence clearly implies that there would be a prolonged and deadly conflict between two " seeds.' Both sides would suffer, but whereas the " seed of the woman " would be wounded in the " heel," the serpent and his " seed " would receive a death-blow. The serpent would be wounded in the " head," and would thus be rendered incapable of further action. And the following scriptures, as well as a great many others, clearly indicate a time when Satan will no longer be the god of this world. Thus we read :—

" For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind." With what results? These :— " And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat : for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble ; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock : and

dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord. (Isa. lxv, 17.)

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." (Rev. xxi, 3-5.)

"And He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Rev. xxii, 1-2.)

These glowing descriptions imply that it will not be until our Lord's reign over the earth that God will have fulfilled the all-embracing promise which He gave to Abraham, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii, 1-3; xxii, 18.) And in the following pages it will be our object to ascertain, from a study of the Scriptures, the principles which God has been applying to the "seed of Abraham" so as to make them fit and proper servants for the great task which

yet lies before them of *blessing* "*all* the families of the earth." As the Apostle truly says (Heb. vii, 7), "the *less* is blessed of the *better*." That being so, it will surely be to our spiritual profit and edification if we can ascertain from the inspired record how, and in what way, the "seed of Abraham" has been made so greatly superior to all other men, that through this "seed" God will even undertake to "*bless all* the families of the earth."

"IN DUE TIME."

"In Thy due time, our Heavenly Father, shall be known
Thy gracious plan, which now is hid
Except unto Thy saints alone.
O glorious day, when Thine All-wisdom, justice, power and love,
The whole creation shall approve!

"In *His* due time, O blessed Jesus, Thou shall see
The travail of Thy soul, and shalt
Be satisfied eternally;
Thine agony on Calvary—the price that Thou didst give,
Shall cause the dead again to live!

"In God's due time, O pilgrim on the 'narrow way,'
Thy painful journey ended, darkest
Night shall turn to brightest day;
Thine every trial, then, thine every tear, shall prove a gem
To beautify thy diadem!

"In His due time, O weary, groaning, sin-cursed
Earth,
The Lord will wipe away thy tears,
And bring the promised 'second birth';
And there shall be no pain, nor any death in
that blest day
When sin and sorrow flee away!

"In His due time angelic choirs shall sing again
In grander strain that heavenly message,
'Peace on earth, good will toward men!'
And every knee shall bow, and every loving
heart confess
The Christ who comes to reign and bless!"

Mrs. G. W. Seibert.

Chapter IV.

God's Judgment on the Old Testament Worthies.

The Scriptures reveal to us the fact that the "seed" which is yet to "bless all the families of the earth" will comprise both an earthly and a heavenly class of "blessers." And God's purpose to give the sin-stained human family a very real blessing, is well shown in the great care He has bestowed in the training of those He has called to be the "channel" of His "blessing" to the bankrupt and impoverished human family.

The earthly class of "blessers," while inferior in office and power to the heavenly class, were nevertheless the first to be called, chosen, and trained for their important future service. Although small in number, yet the first four thousand years of human history were devoted by God to this purpose. The successful candidates comprise the very noblest and best specimens of our race. They range from Abel to John the Baptist, and some of the outstanding members of the class are mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

ABEL. The first of these is Abel, the son of Adam; and as a part of the foundation of that faith which he exhibited in God, he evidently realised that he and his brother Cain were born imperfect because of their sin-stained parents. He perceived that they were quite unfit to meet the absolute holiness of God: nor could they do anything which could justify God in restoring them to the Paradise from which their guilty parents had been expelled. Had they been perfect men there was no reason why God should not restore them to Eden, and give them, individually, the opportunity to prove, under tests, that they each would be well pleasing to God.

Abel doubtless perceived that since God had said that it would be the "seed of the *woman*" which would bruise the "head" of the serpent, the promised "seed," while born of a woman, would not be descended from Adam, nor from any of his sin-stained sons. He thus grasped the great fact, that just as God had to provide the skins of animals in order to cover his sinful parents, so God Himself would provide the promised "seed." And since God had condemned his parents to *death*, it became self-evident that whoever would take their place and bear their penalty must suffer the penalty of death.

Abel himself had no confusion of thought as to what was meant by "*death*." He knew that up to a certain moment his parents had had no existence. When, in process of time, they would suffer the full effects of the death-penalty imposed by God, it would really mean that they would become as though they had never been. They

would simply cease to exist, unless someone took their place, bore their penalty, and thus suffered death on their behalf.

We are not informed as to whether God enlightened him as to how this prospective "seed" would be both *Priest* and *Victim*, and that in effecting a reconciliation between God and man, the blood of the Victim, as a sin-offering, would be presented to God by the Priest, who would experience a resurrection from the dead. The Sin-bearer, as a Victim, would be *sacrificed;* the Sin-bearer, as a Priest, would live forever. Such knowledge, while most valuable, may not have been essential to Abel's faith. He firmly believed what God had foretold, that the promised "seed" must be "bruised in the heel." Such a prophecy implied that the "seed" must suffer before crushing the "head" of the serpent, and therefore before securing the restoration of man to his lost inheritance. He therefore made an offering to God in harmony with his faith, viz., that the promised "seed" would suffer death on *his* behalf, and so secure for him the remission of the penalty and an entrance to the Paradise of God.

Abel therefore rejected the claims of his brother Cain, who evidently had been brought up in the belief that he was the "man from the Lord" who would recover for his parents their lost inheritance. Cain therefore made an offering to God in harmony with his theory that he was a sinless man, who could, in his own strength, and in virtue of his own perfection, recover for the human race all that had been lost. Abel, by his rejection of such a claim,

naturally came into sharp conflict with his brother, and doubtless also with his parents. The question was decisively settled by God's direct intervention; His acceptance of Abel's offering, and His rejection of Cain's was an immediate endorsement of the true faith of Abel. Cain's hopes, aspirations and dreams were thus blighted and shattered, and in bitterness of soul he came again to his brother to learn why *his* offering to God should be rejected, while Abel's, an offering of blood, and involving death, should be respected and accepted by God. Abel must have shown his brother the outstanding facts of the case, clearly and firmly, and in the keen bitterness of his disappointment that he himself was not the promised "seed," Cain struck the mad blow which killed his brother. Abel thus became the first martyr for the truth relating both to the true character of God, and to the true provision of a holy God on behalf of sinful men, viz., that only God Himself could provide the essential sin-offering which alone could meet and satisfy His absolute holiness. Such a sin-offering would have to take man's place, bear man's penalty, and suffer death on man's behalf, before sinful Adam or any of his sinful race could have a fresh trial before God—a trial conducted with a view to ascertaining if, plus knowledge and experience, men would then live in perfect obedience to the will of God. Abel and his offering of "firstlings" thus became a very beautiful type of that perfect sacrifice which his faith had apprehended.

"Yes, Abel, earliest martyr to the strife
Of Satan's serpent brood; thy guiltless life

Fell not unhonoured; thee the Power Divine
Attested righteous at His holy shrine.
To thee the pledge, the sacred witness gave,
That sacrificial blood, through faith, shall save:
Confirmed His promise, and still points, through thee,
To heaven's profoundest, highest mystery:—
MESSIAH, for the world a ransom given,
On earth devoted—pleading now in heaven."

A. Bulmer.

ENOCH. The second man to receive the divine approval was Enoch. He seems to have been the first who had a clear vision of the fatherly heart and infinite love of God. Following the birth of his firstborn son, and the opening up of the fountain of love which it then called forth, he for the first time realised that the Creator was essentially a Father, who had created the human family out of sheer love for children. And as he looked around him and saw the utter indifference of men to their Creator, he realised how sadly they had missed the point of their creation. Man's chief end was indeed to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever. Instead of this, every man went on in his own selfish course, quite regardless of the heart of infinite love which had led to his creation. Hitherto, the love of God had met with practically no response from His rebellious human children. Enoch determined to make good, and to give all the response to God's love which it was possible for one human heart to give. From that hour he walked with God, and learning to love the

holiness of God, he became a preacher of righteousness. The sin of his fellowmen became to him an abomination, and his feelings found expression in the prophecy which he uttered :—" Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude.)

The keynote of the prophecy is the word " ungodly "—no desire for God—and we can readily believe that to the heart of one who had so clearly seen the love of God, and who had returned such a fervent response, " ungodliness " on the part of his fellowmen might well seem to be the most deadly of all sins. And it may have been this open rebuke against the prevalent sins of his time which aroused such an antipathy to the faithful preacher that God intervened, and " took him " into Paradise.

As Enoch was the only human being who, following the expulsion of Adam and Eve, ever entered the " Garden of God," he was thus made a fitting type of the truth of the grand doctrine that " he that doeth the will of God abideth forever," and that the God whom we serve " is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." (I John ii, 17, and Matt. xxii, 31-32.) Enoch, like all others of God's servants, died in faith, not having received the promises. (Heb. xi, 5-13.) Only the actual sacrifice of the divinely appointed Victim, and the presentation of the sacrificial blood as a sin-offering, could give vitality and permanent worth

to all the promises: but when a man falls asleep knowing that his life has been well-pleasing to God, and that his name is written in the Book of Life, it matters really very little whether his peaceful slumbers last for six hours or for six thousand years. That all the saints of the Old Testament, without exception, both "sleep with their fathers" and also "live unto God" is the uniform testimony of the Scriptures. Our Lord Himself informs us that "no man hath ascended into heaven" (John iii, 13), and such a testimony from such an Authority should silence all argument to the contrary. Moreover, when we think of the grand eternal day which is to follow the resurrection morning, what are the six thousand years of sleep in comparison? merely as a drop to the ocean.

NOAH. The next who sought to be a blesser of his fellowmen was Noah, who followed in the footsteps of his great-grandfather Enoch and also became a preacher of righteousness. He made an earnest endeavour to stem the tide of human corruption, which now threatened to overwhelm human society. Apart from the members of his own family, however, his preaching had evidently very little effect, for a true conversion to his viewpoint must have led to a life of decisive action and hearty co-operation. If his preaching was foolishness, his building of the Ark must have seemed to the wiseacres of his day a piece of folly on a par with his preaching—to build such a huge vessel, and so far away from the sea! It was doubtless the standard joke of the whole world for well

over one hundred years, and we can have but little idea of the many shafts of wit and ribaldry which were directed at him, both secretly and openly, which he was called upon to endure. But "Noah walked with God," and that divine fellowship sustained him, and enabled him to become a fitting type of all those who co-operate with God, not only in their own salvation, but in the salvation of others. Only a man of sterling faith in God could have met successfully such a searching test, stinging and lacerating to his feelings. It says much for his sons that they stuck by their father, and helped him in his great task, as by their united efforts mankind was given a fresh start, and God's purposes of mercy and grace were carried forward. God surely has a very deep appreciation of all such servants, and we are glad to learn from God's unfailing Word that when, in the future, His kingdom is established in the earth they then will be accorded positions of great honour and power as the "Princes in all the earth."

ABRAHAM. Abraham comes next upon the stage of human history, and is presented as the man through whom, in a very particular sense, God would "bless all the families of the earth." We read :—"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee : And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing : And I will bless them that bless

thee, and curse him that curseth thee : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Here was a most remarkable promise : so grand, indeed, that we need not wonder that the Apostle Paul refers to it as the Gospel which was preached before to Abraham. (Gal. iii, 8.) It is, indeed, a glorious Gospel—God's spell—and one altogether worthy of its first Preacher, even though that Preacher was Jehovah Himself. Neither Paul nor anybody else ever had any cause to be ashamed of such a Gospel, and it is a thousand pities that those who consider themselves preachers of the Gospel should have so very little appreciation of, and should pay so little attention to, that true Gospel which God Himself imparted to his friend Abraham.

As was very natural, Abraham at first took a somewhat carnal view of this promised "seed" through whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. The earlier messages from God seemed altogether in favour of that viewpoint. For God said to Abram :—"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward : for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth : so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it ; for I will give it unto thee." (Gen. xiii, 14-17.)

Such a promise clearly implied a large and numerous progeny of natural descendants, far more than the large and good land could possibly hold,

which God now graciously assigned to Abraham and his descendants for an everlasting possession : for if his progeny was to be " as the dust of the earth " it surely implied vast numbers. But God showed him something further :—" And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them : and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be." (Gen. xv, 5.)

Now we all know that there is a vast difference between a grain of dust and a " star," and in thus comparing Abraham's " seed " to the " stars " God clearly suggested a " seed " of heavenly origin. Abraham seems to have realised this, for his faith in grasping *this* promise is immediately followed by the great doctrinal statement—" He believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." Abraham had always believed God, but the *faith* which in particular is well-pleasing to God is that which flows from a clear recognition of human sin, and of human incompetence to meet God's perfect requirements, and that God Himself alone can provide the " seed " which is yet to " bless all the families of the earth." (Gal. iii, 16.) Connected with this faith, if it is to be of any real value to the believer, there must be a whole-hearted response to the gracious purpose of God to " bless all the families of the earth." (I Cor. ix, 16 ; II Cor. vi, 1, and Matt. xvi, 25.)

Abraham exhibited just such a loving character, and his fitness to be the channel of blessing by his intercessory prayer on behalf of the Sodomites. It is one of the finest examples of intercessory prayer

to be found in the whole Bible, and will be answered in a much larger and more opulent manner than even Abraham could have anticipated. (Matt. x, 15.) For in the coming thousand-year Day of Judgment, when Our Lord reigns over the earth, and brings to all men the benefits of the ransom-price which He has paid on their behalf, we are assured that He will not forget the Sodomites. And as Abraham will then be one of the "Princes," he will have a splendid opportunity to co-operate with his Lord in giving a worthy answer to his own beautiful prayer.

His education to be a blesser of his fellowmen was carried out under the tuition of God for a period of fifty years. It progressed from the elementary lessons to the more profound : from one successful examination after another until he graduated with full honours. The final examination was very naturally connected with the seed of blessing, as God was now making Abraham a type of Himself.

The command of God was quite definite, for God said :—"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." And there was no hesitation, for "Abraham rose up early in the morning" in order to immediately carry out the divine command. (Gen. xxii, 2-3.) And from Heb. xi, 17-19, we learn that Abraham saw both the death and the resurrection of the "seed of blessing." We read :—

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac : and he that had received the promises

offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Immediately following this sublime act of faith, God gave to His servant and friend the Certificate of Merit. We read :—" By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son : that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed : because thou hast obeyed My voice." (Gen. xxii, 16-18.)

It should be observed that the two analogies of " stars " and " sand " are here used together; and that because with the actual death and resurrection of the true Seed of Promise—our Lord Jesus—the foundation was laid which made possible the calling, selection, development and exaltation to office of both heavenly and earthly seeds of blessing. Comp. Gal. iii, 27-29, with Heb. xi, 39-40, and Rom. iv, 13.

The principles of God's dealings with Abraham set before us the broad principles on which God has been dealing with all His faithful servants ever since. Even as we read in Heb. vi, 15 :—" And so, after he had patiently endured—for fifty years—he obtained the promise." He obtained the promise not merely as a happy child somewhat given to

carnal reasonings, but as a fully matured saint of God, able to comprehend the deep things of God. Neither Abraham nor any of the Old Testament saints has yet obtained the promise in all its blessed reality, as all will yet obtain it in actual experience during Our Lord's millennial reign, but all the faithful of past ages, under God's tuition, came to the point of the "full assurance of faith"—that faith which grasps the glorious future as if it were actually present. Thus it was that Abraham saw the "Lord's Day" and rejoiced. (John viii, 56.)

The outward lives of God's faithful servants and handmaidens varied with time and circumstance, but the broad principles on which He made his selection and undertook to train them to bless their fellowmen were always the same. God required from all a whole-hearted devotion to his will, regardless of all human consequences. On that basis they received the daily grace and strength to do and suffer for the sake of truth and righteousness. Under the severity of the trials, they must have felt very often in heart sympathy with the earnest petition of the Patriarch Job :—"O that Thou wouldest hide me in Sheol, that Thou wouldest keep me secret until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me. . . . All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee : Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thy hands." (Job xiv, 13-15.) They knew that although at the termination of their earthly life they then must make their bed in Sheol, *God* was there. (Psa. cxxxix, 8.) And they were assured, like Daniel,

that after their rest in Sheol, they would be called forth, each to "stand in his lot at the end of the days—princes in all the earth." (Dan. xii, 13, and Psa. xlv, 16.)

John the Baptist was evidently the last outstanding figure in this noble band—The Ancient and Honourable Order of Blessers—"who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy): they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not (the fulfilment of) the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (Heb. xi, 33-40.)

The "better thing" which God has "provided for us" is baptism into Christ as the "members of His body," with the hope set before us that if we are "faithful unto death" we shall be exalted to glory as the members of His Bride: for "*unto*

us " have been " given exceeding great and precious promises; that by *these* we might become partakers of the *divine nature.*" (II Peter i, 4.) All of God's faithful servants will be made " vessels unto honour " in the glory of the kingdom, but in the very nature of things, only those who are " in Christ Jesus " could have the possibility before them of being made " partakers of the *divine nature.*" (Col. iii, 1-4, and comp. with Luke vii, 28, and Psa. xlv, 16.)

" VESSELS OF MERCY, PREPARED UNTO GLORY."

Vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory!
This is your calling and this is your joy!
This, for the new year unfolding before ye,
Tells out the terms of your blessed employ.

Vessels, it may be, all empty and broken,
Marred in the Hand of inscrutable skill;
(Love can accept the mysterious token!)
Marred but to make them more beautiful still.

Vessels, it may be, not costly or golden;
Vessels, it may be, of quantity small,
Yet by the Nail in the Sure Place upholden,
Never to shiver and never to fall.

Vessels to honour, made sacred and holy,
Meet for the use of the Master we love,
Ready for service all simple and lowly,
Ready, one day, for the temple above.

Yes, though the vessels be fragile and earthen,
God hath commanded His glory to shine;
Treasure resplendent henceforth is our burthen,
Excellent power, not ours but Divine.

Chosen in Christ ere the dawn of Creation,
Chosen for Him, to be filled with His grace,
Chosen to carry the streams of salvation
Into each thirsty and desolate place.

Take all Thy vessels, O glorious Finer,
Purge all the dross, that each chalice may be
Pure in Thy pattern, completer, diviner,
Filled with Thy glory, and shining for Thee.

F. R. Havergal.

Chapter V.

God's Judgment on Natural Israel.

We have considered the broad principles on which God dealt with all those saintly souls who, prior to the First Advent and Presence of Our Lord, exhibited a heart wholly devoted to the doing of God's will. We have seen how God accepted them, and trained them for His purpose, viz., to be the "Princes" whom He could exalt to office and power during Our Lord's Millennial Reign. And when we reflect that they will enjoy a "better resurrection" than their fellowmen, even a perfect mind in a perfect human body, we can readily see that they will immediately display an unerring ability to grapple successfully with the many and varied problems which are getting beyond the powers of all present-day governments. They will, indeed, meet a long-felt want.

We now proceed to consider God's dealings with a nation of people who, descended from the Patriarch Jacob, were, in God's due time, brought to Mount Sinai. And there, through Moses as mediator between God and them, they were given the remarkable offer of obtaining everlasting life by

obedience to the Law of God. (See Lev. xviii, 5; Luke x, 25-28; Rom. x, 5; Gal. iii, 12.) By their obedience to God's Law, they could then become a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exod. xix, 5-6.) For as a "royal priesthood" they would be equipped and qualified for the great service of "*blessing* all the families of the earth."

In utter ignorance of God's infinite holiness, and of the grandeur and perfection of His Law, and also of their own sin-stained condition and absolute incompetence to keep such a law, they immediately responded to the offer. At once their answer came, without the slightest hesitation :—"All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." (Verse 8.)

God then gave the Israelites the ten commandments, after which Moses went up into the mount to receive a divinely-written copy on two tables of stone, that thus the Covenant between God and His people might have a solid and satisfactory basis. Alas for man's pious resolutions. Within forty days they had wilfully violated the first and second commandments, and possibly others, and as the whole nation was involved, the whole nation immediately came under the sentence of death. (Exod. xxxii, 10.) And the whole nation would have been destroyed there and then, but for the intercessory prayer of their mediator. (See verse 32.)

That first experience was therefore sufficient to show the utter hopelessness of any imperfect man ever obtaining life by a steadfast obedience to God's perfect law, and so of winning for himself the right and privilege of being a royal priest. Nevertheless,

God ratified the Covenant, and began to deal with them, to some extent, on a typical basis. God knew that in His Own good time the perfect One would be born under that law Who would have no difficulty in keeping it, and also in winning for Himself the grand prize which the law offered.

The Israelites, therefore, as a nation never became, a "kingdom of priests." Their failure, however, had no deterrent effect on the fulfilment of God's purposes. From the nation He selected one tribe to be specially His, and from that tribe He selected one family, and on the basis of animal sacrifices He laid down rules and regulations whereby all the males of that line, born without physical deformities, should at a certain age be consecrated as priests, so as to come between a holy God and their sin-stained brethren. For while God's offer still remained open to any Israelite, as is manifest from Our Lord's rejoinder to the lawyer which is recorded in Luke x, 25-28, the truth must soon have driven itself home to every honest heart, how utterly hopeless was such an attempt.

To what extent Paul's reasonings were held by intelligent Jews we cannot now say. The great Apostle reasons thus :—"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." The law of God, in setting before men a perfect standard of righteousness, naturally tended to make sin exceeding sinful, and thus became to every honest Israelite a schoolmaster which pointed forward to the necessity and the coming of a Saviour. The Apostle Peter sets forth the practical aspect

of being under the law when he urged the Church *not* to "put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." (Acts xv, 10.)

Now, had the Law Covenant with Israel done nothing but that it would have rendered a most important service: it prepared one people to understand the Son of God. And, from that people, God was able to select a "remnant" of faithful souls who, wholly devoted to the doing of God's will, could be taken by Him and be baptised into Christ. By comparing Rom. vi, 3, with Gal. iii, 27-29, we learn that only those who are "*in* Christ Jesus," and who faithfully maintain their standing in Him, are to be regarded as the real "Seed of Abraham," and the "heirs according to the promise" through whom God will yet "bless all the families of the earth."

But the Law Covenant with Israel did more. The history of that people is a history of backslidings and revivals, and since human nature is always the same the history of Israel provides many types of the Church of the Gospel Age. The Israelites were prone to fall away into the idolatrous practices of their heathen neighbours of making images and idols, and setting up groves and altars in high places. These addenda became identified with the worship of Jehovah, and as they were entirely opposed to the terms of their Covenant they became an abomination in the sight of God.

The last great reformer in cleansing these away was good king Josiah; but as his reforms seem to have had no effect whatever upon the heart of the

people God permitted him to be cut off in battle, so that the people might have as their kings men so deficient in strength of moral purpose that they were unable to successfully combat the idolatrous and perverted cravings of the people. (See Ezek. viii.) God thus over-ruled in the affairs of His faithless people, in order that their outward conduct might correspond with their treacherous hearts, and so find in the coming judgments their proper and fitting rewards. (Ezek. v.) Zephaniah uttered his prophecy during Josiah's reign, but it is simply a prophecy of inevitable doom, the only ray of comfort he can give being found in his exhortation to those who have been obedient to the will of God :—" Seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." (Zeph. ii, 3.)

Jeremiah began his ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah. For nearly forty years he appealed to the people to give their hearts to God, and to act in harmony with His law, so that thereby God might continue to bless them by dwelling in His temple—a guarantee to them of His protecting care. (Comp. II Sam. vii, 10, with II Kings xxi, 7-15; also Ezek. chapters ix, x, xi, for a symbolical description of the glory of God departing from His house.) The record seems to show that very few indeed gave the slightest heed to the earnest evangelical prophet, and time and time again the faithful preacher would have suffered death at the hands of the leaders of the powerful Egyptian political party, but for God's protecting care at the crucial moments of danger. Few preachers have had a more sincere patriotism, or a more fervent desire to serve God and their

fellowmen, and the utter failure of his ministry but prepared the Jews and Israelites for the most terrible punishments.

Five years before the final judgment fell upon the now doomed city God in His goodness raised up another faithful preacher, this time among the captives of Judah who were living near the Chebar canal, and he, realising the utter futility of further expostulation and entreaty with such a rebellious people, was commanded to preach a silent pantomimic sermon which was to continue for just over fourteen months. (Ezek. chap. iv.) While this remarkable sermon could in no way avert the coming doom, it would prepare the more thoughtful among the Jews and Israelites to recognise the fact that the silent preacher was a true prophet, who had been enlightened by Jehovah, and would thus give to his later prophecies, coming after the destruction of Jerusalem, a credibility which otherwise they might have lacked. And that Ezekiel's authority as a prophet increased as time went on is readily seen from the fact that his prophetic outlook wielded a greater influence among the Jews prior to Our Lord's First Presence than that of any other prophet. Indeed, it may be truly said that those who returned in process of time crystallised Ezekiel's ritual into the system of Judaism when they had lost all of Ezekiel's fervency of spirit.

Prior to the first destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, God had dealt with the Israelites as a people, sending them national blessings or national punishments. But at the beginning of Ezekiel's ministry God told them

plainly through His servant that He was now about to brush aside forever such a principle, and that He would, in the coming years, deal with them as individuals, wherein each man would be rewarded or punished according to *his* deeds, without the punishment having a far-reaching effect either upon his fellowmen, or upon his children. In chapter iii God thus warns His people :—

"When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hands. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

"Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous man sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul."

From that time, when a faithful pastor declared God's Word, each Israelite who heard it would be held responsible before God, and would be judged on the basis of his obedience or disobedience to that Word. When God says that "he shall live," or "he shall die," it certainly means that the Israelite would live or die to his covenant, its blessings and

obligations. All men without exception, whether good or bad, pass away in death. The clear point therefore is that from that time, when they all would be scattered in foreign countries, they would live or die to their covenant obligations, its blessings or judgments, according to their obedience or disobedience to the revealed will of God. The principle is so important and far-reaching that the prophet returns to his theme in chapter xviii. There God, through His servant, speaks to His people thus :—

"What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Since "death" is the universal lot of mankind, it is manifest that God is not here referring to that general death penalty which comes on all, whether good or bad, but simply to the fact that from henceforth the Israelite who wilfully violated his covenant obligations would die to his covenant blessings, and would no longer enjoy a special standing with God as the circumcised descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God thus continues :—

"But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near a menstruous woman, and hath not oppressed any, but

hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, said the Lord God.

"If he begat a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, and that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: Shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

"Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, ... he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, he shall die in his iniquity. Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son

shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his wicked way and live?

"But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

"Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

"Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the

Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn ye, and live."

That the clear enunciation of these principles was not lost upon the Israelites is manifest from the fact that under the Decree of Cyrus, a number returned, mainly Jews and Levites. These had faith in the promises of God, and more especially the promises which foretold of their coming Messiah and Deliverer, who was to be of the seed of David. They abolished all outward forms of idolatry. Under the stern discipline of such leaders as Ezra and Nehemiah, and under the preaching of such prophets as Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the Jews and Israelites were brought to a very exact observance of all the outward ceremonies and ritual demanded by their law. They also recognised that if any Israelite was to occupy a position of honour and power in the coming kingdom of God, he must exhibit, in his daily life and outward conduct, a certain standard of holiness, and a sect arose among them whose members claimed that in their daily lives they could and did manifest such a standard as the law of God demanded. As the claim was manifestly false, its natural repercussion was the forma-

tion of another sect, composed of Modernists and Freethinkers, who were largely controlled by those negative doctrines which appeal to men who are nauseated by the stifling atmosphere of religious hypocrisy.

They were respectively known as Pharisees and Sadducees, and as the Pharisees were orthodox believers who held intact all the vital doctrines revealed in the Word of God, Our Lord naturally made His special appeal to them. He, however, was compelled to expose their hypocrisy, which, so long as it remained a controlling factor in their lives, was an effectual barrier to their reception of *His* message. It was impossible for Him to make any appeal to the Sadducees, because of their childish trifling with the Word of God, which had actually removed them much further off from God than even the Samaritans or the surrounding heathen.

There were, however, honest and faithful Israelites, both in Palestine and scattered among the surrounding nations, and that these were the representatives in the sight of God of the whole twelve tribes is manifest from the following Scriptures :— "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers : unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." (Acts xxvi, 6-7.) Such a statement, coupled with the reasonings and conclusions set forth in the second chapter of Romans, is a clear demonstration that Paul believed that there were still faithful representatives of all the twelve tribes, and that these alone had a covenant relationship with God.

James the Just was a most orthodox Jew in his outward conduct, and soon became, although not an Apostle, one of the leaders in the Church at Jerusalem. He sent his epistle to the "twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" because, by the time it was circulated, all faithful Israelites had heard of the claims made by the early believers on behalf of Jesus of Nazareth.

In the early Church, largely composed of orthodox Jews and Israelites, the distinction between Judaism and Christianty was outwardly very slight, and James could make his appeal to the scattered and distressed Israelites, not so much on the distinctive doctrines which Paul set before his Gentile hearers and converts, as rather on the fact that it had now become possible for every Israelite, through the power of a living faith in a living Christ, to daily exhibit in his conduct the royal law of love. And the fact that such an epistle could be sent to the twelve tribes, would imply that a large number either were believers in Jesus of Nazareth, or were prepared to listen to arguments and reasonings from those who had accepted the Christian belief. And the persecutions which arose, and the changes which occurred as a natural consequence, tended to unite and blend together into one body all believers, and the same forces tended to crystallise all Israelitish unbelievers into unity with their Jewish brethren who had instigated the crucifixion of Jesus. There was, indeed, no middle course except that of open infidelity to their covenant, when they became, as we have already seen, a part of the Gentile world, dead in trespasses and sins.

To those Jews and Israelites who opposed the claims of Jesus and yet stuck to the promises made to their fathers and an outward observance of the law of Moses there was only one possible sequel—partial blindness. Their table of good things under the Old Covenant now became " a trap, a snare and a stumblingblock," and, indeed, could become nothing else so long as they believed it to be a far superior table to that which had been provided for believers in Christ. Their inability to estimate at its true value " the shame of the cross " and " the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death " (Gal. vi, 14; Phil. iii, 8-11) blinded them to the " heavenly calling " and its joint-heirship with Christ in His Messianic reign over the earth. It is only " he that doeth His will " who " shall know of the doctrine," as it is only by the actual drinking of the " Lord's cup " that the " heavens can be opened " unto us; and only from that time are we enabled to gradually comprehend and to appreciate at their true value heavenly things.

B.I.

Respecting those Israelites who had become Christians, and whose identity was lost among the nations which nominally had become Christian, God could so overrule their wanderings that through their descendants He could and would fulfil those prophecies which, in the very nature of things, could neither apply to the Church of Christ, nor to the orthodox Jews. We have, as an example, the prophecy of Jacob, recorded in Gen. xlviii, 16-19. He gave the sons of Joseph a very special blessing, saying prophetically, "Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." This was good,

but better was to come, for, with prophetic vision he could foretell that while the elder brother was to become "a great people," the younger was to become "a multitude of nations." Joseph, in fact, received the "double portion" of the "firstborn," which was divided between his two sons; but when he mistakenly thought that his father was giving the better portion to the younger brother because of failing eyesight, and interposed in order to reverse it in favour of his firstborn Manasseh, his father replied, "I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become *a multitude of nations.*"

We have also the prophecy of Moses, recorded in Deut. xxxiii, 13-17—"And of Joseph, he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are the horns of the wild-ox: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."

Now it should be self-evident that in the very nature of things these prophecies could have no application whatever to the Church of Christ, whose calling is "heavenly," and whose prosperity is spiritual," gained, moreover, by the "sacrifice" of the "natural." Nor have they been fulfilled, as some suppose, in "Judah and his companions." Jacob certainly gave Judah a very rich blessing, but it has been almost wholly fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ—"the Lion of the tribe." The "blessing" which Moses gave to Judah clearly implied that "Judah" would be separated from his people; that he would have many enemies, and but little power to combat them: hence his constant appeal to God for protection, and Moses' special request for him is that his prayer may be answered. Unlike Judah, the descendants of Joseph are to enjoy great prosperity as a "multitude of nations," and the power to "push the peoples together to the ends of the earth." Their colonizing ability is foretold in "the good will of him that dwelt in the bush." Unlike Joseph, the true Church is to be "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," and not only so, but is to be gathered "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (I Pet. ii, 9; Rev. v, 9.) The general failure among God's people to note these distinctions in the blessings bestowed through Jacob and Moses, combined with the general tendency to apply every blessing to the Church and every judgment to the Jew, has cast a veil upon many Old Testament prophecies, which we believe are nearing their final consummation, and which ought to be of interest to God's people.

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To Christ the Church is the Body of Christ

In Ezek. xxxvii, 15-28, we are clearly told that the division and separation of the houses of Israel and Judah would persist until the time for the establishment of God's Kingdom in the earth. We read :—" The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions : then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions : and join them one to another into one stick ; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God :—

" Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God :—

" Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen (nations), whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land : and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel ; and one king shall be king to them all : and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all : neither shall they defile themselves any more with

Could not these things be true of orthodox Jews

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their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions : but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them : so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd : they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever : and my servant David shall be their Prince for ever.

" Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them : and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them : yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen (nations) shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

It should be perfectly clear to every child of God that such a reunion in Palestine, as is described by the prophet, has never yet taken place; and indeed, cannot be realised until God takes the necessary steps to fulfil Jer. xvi, 14-16. There we read :—" Therefore, behold, the days come, said the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them : and I will bring

them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."

On various occasions the Israelites have been carried away, or *hunted out of* Palestine. The experience will surely be altogether unique in human history when a people shall be *hunted back* to the land which God gave to their patriarchs for an everlasting possession. The return of the exiles is thus described in Jeremiah xxxi, 5-12 :—

"For there shall be a day, that the watchman upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations : publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together : a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them : I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble : for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn."

"Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath re-

deemed Jacob, and ramsomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd : and their soul shall be as a watered garden ; and they shall not sorrow any more at all."

These Scriptures in no sense imply that *all* of Jacob's natural descendants will return to Palestine. The vast majority will not return for the very good reason that they have practically no interest in the great purpose of God, to bless all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham. They are entirely devoid of that spirit of whole-hearted devotion to the will of God which alone can make God's purposes a living reality in the life. As the Apostle reminds us in Rom. ix, 6, " They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." And again, quoting from Isaiah in verse 27, " Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." The inspired writers are, of course, regarding " salvation " from a particular standpoint—the standpoint of having been saved in order to become co-workers with God in the salvation of the human race during Our Lord's millennial reign. Very few can enjoy this primary salvation because they are so deficient in faith in God and in love for their fellowmen. When these qualities of mind are cultivated, they lead us to study God's Word and Will, and to gladly co-operate with Him in the fulfilment of His purposes. In and through these saved ones God will fulfil Obadiah 21 :—" And

They are to be driven there. "Limited" Page 66

saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." And through these "saviours" God will fulfil Rom. xi, 26-27 :—"And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob : for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

In the working out of God's plan of redemption for mankind, the sins of Israel cannot be removed until the Church, the Body of Christ, has been completed and glorified. Not till then can the blood of Christ be released from its present purpose of giving *life* to the "members of His Body." In other words, God's Elect enjoy a "great salvation" that thus they may become fitting instruments, when glorified with their Lord, to save their fellowmen. For it is God's will that *all men* should be saved—from the original condemnation—and should then be brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth. (I Tim., ii, 4.)

For some time before that great event God will be gathering back to their homeland all faithful Jews and Israelites by means of His "fishermen." Following the glorification of the Church, God will drive the remaining faithful Jews and Israelites back to Palestine by means of His "hunters." Thus will it be that both heavenly and earthly phases of God's Kingdom will be prepared for the resurrection and appropriate reception of all those "Worthies" who are to be made the "Princes in all the earth."

Thus will it be that God will fulfil His promise contained in Isaiah i, 25-27 :—"And I will turn my

hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin : and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning : afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." In process of time Jerusalem will be so completely transformed that she will be found worthy of even bearing such a name as "Jehovah-tsidkenu," for in Jer. xxxiii, 16, we read :—"In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely : and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness."

For God promised the land of Palestine to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession. And to become an *everlasting* possession, it must become a part of the Paradise of God—the earthly phase of God's Kingdom, and peopled with perfect men. And to the realisation of that ideal, God will fulfil to His people the great promise set forth in Jer. xxxi, 31-34 :—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord : but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every

man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Such an accurate knowledge of God could only be acquired by every man coming under and enjoying a prolonged period of tuition under the most competent teachers, and where the teachers are all agreed as to the true character of God and the law of commandments He has given to men. Its acquisition by every man also implies the complete removal of all the mental and physical defects which now hinder so many men from comprehending the true character of God, and from rendering that whole-hearted obedience which He justly requires from every man. In the following lines, culled from "Messiah's Kingdom," the poetess refers to a number of the prophecies which will be fulfilled during the coming years.

"Yet, ere that day of glory come,
The darkened heavens with deepening gloom
Shall signs portentous bear;
Hoarse, murmuring thunders roll above,
Earth's strong foundations trembling move,
And whirlwinds rend the air!
Yes! judgment shall Messiah's way prepare;
His enemies shall feel His might,
Who bears His two-edged weapon bright
Still girded on His thigh;
His arrows on His mighty bow,
New strung to lay the wicked low,
Shall kindle as they fly!

"The Heathen who presumptuous stood,
In all the bitterness of scorn,
Exulting o'er the sons of God,
When outcast, desolate, forlorn,
Shall feel the power their pride disdained,
When Javan bends to Judah's might,
And dim with sanguine meteors stained,
The lurid crescent sinks in night.

"Who still refuse to own
The sure Foundation-Stone
Shall feel its ponderous weight descend,
And break the neck that will not bend,
And grind to dust the stubborn frame
That, proud, rejects Messiah's claim,
That will not own His judgment just,
Nor, suppliant, to His mercy trust,
Nor touch the sceptre of His grace,
Nor, contrite, kiss the Son, nor, meek, His rule embrace.

"Thou, Israel, then shalt own
That precious Corner-Stone;
Shalt gaze with weeping eyes,
While springs of sorrow rise!
Yes! there shall be a gushing tide
Of anguish for the Crucified;
For Him transpierced on Calvary,
A flood of grief and agony,
Empassioned as the stream that rose,
With rushing agitated swell,
When, stricken by Egyptian foes,
Josiah at Megiddon fell!

Bitter and deep that loud lament shall flow,
Like his who, in an ecstasy of woe,
Bewails his firstborn slain;
Who sees his manhood's pride, his age's stay,
His only hope, untimely torn away,
The hapless victim of disease and pain.
Then, then, in lowliness of heart,
Shall grieve each family apart;
David mourn the King rejected,
Levi weep the Priest denied,
Nathan, Prophecy neglected,
Bitter Shimei own his pride.

"Then shall the Lord His ancient word fulfil;
To David's head the regal crown restore;
Again His temple build on Zion's hill;
Replant His vine, to root it out no more.

"Discord and enmity
To hell's dark caves shall flee
And heaven-born Love,
Descending from above,
Soft, on balmy wings dispense
Gentler, sweeter influence
Than ever precious unguent shed,
Poured by anointing hand on Aaron's sainted head.

"Israel's mountains then shall bear
The withering curse no more;
Truth and justice, ruling there,
The blessing shall restore:
Soft as dews on Hermon's hill,

Its genial influence shed,
Bright, as when the storm is still,
Enlivening sunbeams spread.
The desert then shall bloom,
And yield its rich perfume,
Fragrant as Eden's bowers,
When garlanded with Nature's earliest flowers :
Then towering cedars to the skies
On snow-clad Lebanon shall rise,
And on the wilderness descend refreshing showers.

Then shall the staff of Ephraim
Be one with Judah's sceptred rod,
United in the hand of Him
Who is again His people's God.
The weak, in David's might,
Before the Lord shall stand,
And he, as Gabriel bright,
The strength of God's right hand.
Within the sacred towers
No violence shall dwell,
The dire destroyer's powers
Messiah's arm repel.
Beneath his banners ranged,
The scattered multitude,
To warlike thousands changed,
The veteran strength renewed,
Shall fight beneath their Captain's eye,
And earth and hell before them fly.

. . . . . .

"Then shall their land, now desolate,
Regain its lost estate;
Then shall the towers of Zion stand secure;
Her bright foundations pure,
Reflecting heaven's own beams, shall evermore endure.
Her gates Jehovah's arm shall raise,
And call them, Praise!
Make them resplendent with His glory's blaze,
As light upon the glistening ruby plays.
Around her walls no stranger foes
In hostile might shall close:
On every lofty tower unfurled
Her banner to the wondering world
Salvation's sacred sign shall bear,
And tell, no weapon prospers there.
Her righteous sons Jehovah makes His care,
There plants His peaceful throne, and builds His temple fair.

"Pure on those pearly skies
The blushing morn shall rise:
O'er that pellucid atmosphere,
As diamond bright, as crystal clear,
The sunbeam cast its thousand dyes.
There glistening with intensest light,
That giant orb, in sevenfold might,
O'er the blue heaven shall urge his way;
Nor vagrant cloud through ether stray,
To intercept one dazzling ray:
Nor dusky shades of night
Again involve the world in gloom,
When that triumphant hour shall come,

In clear unwaning lustre bright,
The spotless church shall shine;
Mirror of grace, of purity Divine,
Effulgent with the blaze of Glory Infinite.

. . . . . .

"Great was Thy might, O God of Israel,
When haughty Misraim bowed beneath Thy stroke;
Great was Thy might when stern Assyria fell,
When impious Babylon received Thy yoke.
Again Thine arm, uplifted high,
Its vengeance on Thy foes shall wreak;
Proud Nilus' sevenfold streams be dry;
Euphrates turn his current back.
Yes! when Thy hand, ungrasped, shall set
The rushing tempest whirlwind free,
The ocean shall its course forget,
And mountain waves a bulwark be.
It is Thy Word, Who hast compressed the sea
Within its circling zone of sand;
And o'er the land
Sooner its waves shall roll tumultuously,
Than Thy decree
Less firm than heaven's eternal pillars stand.

"When shall Thy might in Israel's cause appear?
When shall Thy conquering arm salvation bring?
When shall the Heathen of Thy triumphs hear,
Thy ransomed people of Thy glory sing?
Ah! yet beneath the raven's dusky wing

They grope for light, though now the noon is high.
When shall Thy conquering arm salvation bring?
Nor help appears, nor intercessor nigh,
Till Thou, O Lord, awake, in mightiest majesty.

"Wilt Thou not rend the curtains of Thy throne,
And bid the mountains at Thy presence flow?
Wilt Thou not hear the long-protracted groan,
And to Thy Church Thy dreadful glory show?
Come, and the trembling earth shall fear;
Thy foes Thy name revere:
Thy saints, adoring, bless
Thy truth and righteousness.
Come! to Thy Church Thy glory show!
Come! bid the mountains at Thy presence flow!

"Who is this that, armed for fight,
Assumes the warrior's crest,
Braces quick the corslet bright
Upon His ample breast?
Vengeance as a garment takes,
Cloaks Himself in flaming zeal,
Earth beneath His footsteps shakes,
Her strong foundations reel?
As a lion roused for fight,
He meets His crouching prey,
Marches in majestic might,
Along the crimsoned way.
Bright His furbished falchion gleams,
Brandished by His strong right hand;
Lo, 'tis bathed in sanguine streams,
That deluge Edom's land.

"Who is this that bears the war
O'er hosts of slaughtered foes?
See! His standard waves afar;
In vain their squadrons close:
Conquered by resistless might,
Like Autumn's spoils they lie;
Nerveless falls the arm in fight,
The feet refuse to fly.
Lo, He treads them in His ire;
Blood His dazzling raiment stains;
Flows His wrath in liquid fire,
Along the burning plains.

"Thou, Zion, thou canst tell
Who, thus invincible,
Hath pledged for thee
A glorious victory!
Lift up thine eyes, the Conqueror hail!
Messiah on His march to save!
His might shall o'er thy foes prevail,
Arouse thy myriads from the grave;
He shall thine heritage regain,
Collect thy long-dissevered bands;
From Egypt's flood, from Shinar's plain,
From borean climes, and southern lands,
To distant isles His trumpet's sound
Shall bear the thundering summons round.

"Hark! the sound of trampling steeds!
Hark! the cry of martial men!
Shouts, as wave to wave succeeds,
Mount, and fall, and mount again!
Who, with shield, and spear, and lance,

Glistening in the noontide beam,
Towards the channelled depths advance,
Press into the severed stream?
Who, with purple banners bright,
From the coral path ascend;
Numerous as the stars of night,
Towards the stream of Jordan bend?
Who, on Salem's sacred towers
Plants the lion staff again?
Israel shouts, 'The land is ours!
Now, adored Messiah, reign!'

"Yes! for that victory
  Shall such hosannahs be
As never yet from battle-field arose;
Such as not Israel, o'er Egyptian foes,
  Raised on the desert strand,
When minstrelsy its loftiest numbers chose,
  To hymn Jehovah's hand.
  When from that land,
In multitudinous acclaim, shall rise
This full-toned hallelujah to the skies?
When Israel, wildered long, shall understand
The prescient Spirit's counsel to the wise,
And to celestial truth unveil their long-closed eyes."

—*A. Bulmer.*

(Rivington's, 1833.)

Chapter VI.

God's Judgment on His Anointed.

Our English word "anointed" is the literal translation of the Hebrew word "messiah," and the Greek word "christos." It is frequently used in the Scriptures in an official sense, and signifies, "The Anointed of God," "The Christ, Head and members."

All orthodox Israelites looked forward with longing and great earnestness to their long-expected Messiah, and especially from the time that they became subject to the Gentile Powers. Their Scriptures clearly foretold that when their Messiah came to reign over them, they would then no longer be a subject race, but rather the people chosen by God whose law and religious ideals would then dominate the whole world. And then it would be clearly seen that all those Emperors whom God had permitted for a brief period to wield universal control, were indeed but feeble and fleeting types of Him concerning Whom it was written :—

"He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long

as the moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents : the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him : all nations shall serve him.

"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence : and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

"And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba : prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. . . . His name shall endure forever : his name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed." (Psalm lxxii.)

We need hardly wonder that hard-headed business men, whose minds and hearts were wholly controlled by such glowing pictures as the foregoing, had an insuperable difficulty in recognising in Jesus of Nazareth their long-promised Messiah, Who, according to the prophecy, was to be universally recognised as the Emperor of the whole world.

Selfish minds become narrow and bigoted; and

as the Coming One had to undertake a vast number of duties, fulfil a great number of types, and occupy quite a range of the most important offices, He had to be described in ways so numerous and varied that it was difficult for selfish and unrenewed hearts to see in the meek and lowly Nazarene even the smallest beginnings of their fond hopes respecting the glorious future in store for the orthodox descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And just as those Jews failed to recognise in Jesus their promised Messiah, so, with but few exceptions, have their descendants failed to recognise Him.

And Christians are wrong in attributing their unbelief to mere human perversity. To understand Jewish feeling we must take up and occupy the Jewish standpoint, and thus have our minds filled with all the glorious *earthly* promises which naturally aroused all their hopes and expectations, and which yet await fulfilment. To spiritualise all these Old Testament promises, as is so frequently done, is to make the Word of God mean anything at all, according to the fancy of the interpreter, and renders a true analysis, with a view to a practical, work-a-day understanding of the Scriptures, utterly hopeless. On the other hand, to apply all the blessings to the Church and all the judgments to the Jews is even more pernicious, as it practically ignores or sets aside all the principles on which every divine verdict must be based. And in the coming years, when God's wrath falls upon "Great Babylon," the now despised Jew will be able to give a very telling rejoinder to those who have been so free in criticising him.

The Jews expected that their Messiah would become "The Anointed of God." The prophet Isaiah had written of Him (chap. xi) :—"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots : and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears : but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth : and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

Now, Jesus of Nazareth exhibited just such a character as the prophet describes, and it was not His failure on these points which led the Jews to regard Him as a deceiver and imposter, but rather, the seeming impossibility of His ever being able to fulfil the rest of the prophecy respecting the changed relationship which would then be seen between the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the calf and the young lion, the cow and the bear, the lion and the ox, the baby and the asp, the youngster and the cockatrice : and His seeming inability to enforce those social conditions where "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the great deep." And feeling their

own weakness when individually opposed to such an intellect as His, they could do nothing else than combine to force the issue, so that if He were indeed the Messiah which they had been led to expect, He could easily manifest His power both against themselves, and against all His other enemies.

To some extent we can sympathise with the Jews in their blind hatred and unbelief, but in their method of arresting Jesus, in their unprincipled and injudicial conduct during the course of His trial, and in the handsome gift which they bestowed upon the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb on the morning of the resurrection, in order that they might help in circulating a falsehood, they showed a disregard for the truth which more than justified Our Lord's solemn question :—"How can ye escape the damnation of hell?"—the extreme penalty of the law, the second death. They certainly prepared themselves to give a worthy fulfilment to Dan. xii, 2 :—"Some shall awake . . . to shame and everlasting contempt." And in that coming Day of Judgment they are likely to have some trouble with the four soldiers whom they helped to elevate to the unique position of being the only witnesses in human history who were able to give a graphic account of what occurred while they were *asleep!*

Although Our Lord had had a prehuman existence, yet He was, when born of the virgin Mary, only a perfect human baby. To us it may forever remain a mystery how it was possible for a glorious Spirit to be so transferred to the womb of the virgin that He Who had been a Spirit became in process of time a perfect human baby. But while the problem is

clearly beyond the scope of human knowledge, the fact itself is not beyond human acceptance. The power of God was equal to that wonderful event which stands unique in human history, for in the first-born Son of the virgin we recognise the only perfect human baby the world has ever known—absolutely flawless.

That perfect Baby grew as all babies grow, to boyhood, puberty, adolescence, young manhood and full maturity. As He grew in stature He grew in wisdom, but at no period of His life had He violated any feature of the law of God : hence, at the age of thirty He stood before God a fully matured man, sinless, faultless, and with His mind stored with the entire Old Testament Scriptures. He was an orthodox believer in the Hebrew Scriptures, and never at any time had the slightest necessity to question their authenticity, veracity and divine authority. He accepted the Old Testament Scriptures at their own valuation as being the very Word of God, and unfailingly called attention to their authoritative statements in support of His teaching and principles. Indeed, so profound was His faith in the Hebrew Scriptures as being the very Word of God that He could say :—"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." And well knowing the natural depraved tendency of sinful men to get rid of the sharp-pointedness of God's Word by some means or other, He followed up the foregoing declaration by the solemn warning :—"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall

teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v, 18-19.)

Up to the age of thirty He grew in favour with God and man, because up to that time He was the only perfect natural man in the whole world, born under a perfect law which He alone could keep. His daily attitude toward that law and His blameless conduct must have appealed immensely to all those who, born under the same law, were never able to render to God a perfect obedience to all its requirements.

But he had become a perfect man not merely to show His fellowmen that it was possible for a man to keep the law of God: rather, He had become a man for the suffering of death, and that raised a far greater problem that even the transference of His life from spirit to human conditions. For Adam and his sin-stained descendants had all been condemned to death, not merely for a few thousand years with an awakening at the end, but for ever; and whoever would take man's place must bear man's penalty. As the glorious Logos He could not take man's place, because He was so much superior, and in no sense could He then be called a ransom—a price to correspond to the first perfect man Adam.

The first essential, therefore, was that He should become a man, and thus it was that "He Who was

rich—in heavenly glory and honour—for our sakes became poor," i.e., became a perfect man, and at the age of thirty He stood before God the only perfect man who could take man's place, bear man's penalty, and suffer eternal death on man's behalf. And had that been God's will for Him we may well believe that, like Moses before Him, and Paul after Him, He would have been willing to have suffered even that terrible fate. But the suffering of such a fate would not only have been abhorrent to the love, wisdom and justice of God: it would have been so to every right-minded man and woman who has ever lived. The great problem therefore, was "How could He, on the one hand, meet and suffer this eternal loss, and on the other hand, in harmony with all right sentiment, win for Himself an eternal prize?" In many respects the problem was much greater than even that of His transference from spirit to human conditions, because Justice demanded an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life; and since a perfect man had sinned a perfect man must take the sinner's place, and bear the sinner's penalty.

A doctrine held by many, that while Adam and all his descendants were condemned to everlasting torment in a lake of fire, Jesus was so infinitely superior that He only just needed to taste of death for three days, is not only false sentiment toward the holiness, love and justice of God, but is utterly opposed to the teaching of the Scriptures, and as a plea would be rejected by every Court of Justice worthy of the name.

Such a theory ignores the principle underlying

the plain statement that Jesus "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," which surely implies that since a man had sinned another man must bear the penalty of sin, whatever that penalty might be. And since Jesus was the Creator of all things, He was naturally above both angels and men: hence it was that by the power of God He "was made flesh," in order to correspond exactly with the first man in his sinless perfection.

The problem of His resurrection from death, while utterly insoluble to man, or by man, was not so to the infinite wisdom and power of God, Who already had decided that His well-beloved Son should become the PRIEST as well as the necessary VICTIM for sacrificial offering. And in the Mosaic economy a large number of types had been arranged to shadow forth that two-fold aspect of Our Lord's life, death and resurrection; but it was naturally impossible to comprehend these types until the Antitype had come and the work of atonement had been completed.

Until His baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit our Lord was neither Priest nor Victim. He lived a truly natural life as the only perfect man among imperfect men, to whom a truly natural life was now impossible: and in the Coming Age, when the biography of that perfect life shall be published and made known to the whole world, it will set before all natural men that perfect ideal which they have thus far vainly sought, and will surely stimulate them to strive after that perfection of conduct which alone can be well-pleasing to their Creator.

In the case of our Lord a complete change came over His life from the moment that He had been baptised by John, who, following the performance of the rite, began to see the realisation of his mission. God had communicated to him that he was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and that the One appointed by God would be indicated and clearly revealed by a new dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

Up to the baptism of our Lord the Holy Spirit had come upon the servants of God only at certain times, when It moved them to speak those truths outside the realm of human reason and knowledge. It operated on the mind for a time and then ceased. It was not an abiding influence. But the sign given to John was that when the Holy Spirit came upon the Messiah, It would *remain*, as an enlightening, begetting power. (John i, 29-34.)

Immediately after His baptism our Lord engaged in prayer: the heavens were opened unto Him, and John saw the Holy Spirit, in a bodily form like a dove, descend upon Jesus and *remain* upon Him. The Holy Spirit did not come, and then depart. It came and *remained*, so that from that moment our Lord became the Anointed of God. At that moment God fulfilled Psalm ii, 7 :—" Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee," and also Psalm cx, 4 :—" Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Comp. Heb. chap. v.)

Now it was our Lord's perfect mind and will which was there begotten and anointed by the Holy Spirit of God; and the perfect mind and will thus begotten by the quickening power of the Holy

Spirit became the Priest after the order of Melchizedek, while His human nature, with all its human affections, became the sacrificial Victim. From that moment He ceased to live a natural life, while He, the Priest, began to pour out His human soul unto death in laying down His life for the brethren; for He had come to "finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin; to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy." (Dan. ix, 24.)

The superhuman task thus set before Him required that He should be endued with all the power of God. It also required that on His part there should not be the slightest mistake, and although He had now the whole of the Old Testament stored up in His perfect memory, since spiritual things are spiritually discerned, time and quietness were needed in order that He might come to an accurate understanding and decision respecting all the outstanding facts and features of the work which lay before Him. To that end He was led—impelled, driven—by the Spirit into the wilderness, in order that there, alone with the Word of God and guided by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, He might comprehend the entire plan of God as it applied to Himself during the time when He would be engaged in pouring out His soul unto death. And Satan, realising that here at last was the challenge to his supremacy as the god of this world, came to divert Him, if possible, from the straight path outlined in God's Word. His three-fold method of attack, however, which hitherto had

proved so successful with Eve and her descendants, now ignominiously failed to accomplish anything.

Satan, blinded by selfishness and selfwill, can have no clear apprehension of the Holy Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of love and holiness; hence, while his temptations could appeal to the flesh, even to the perfect flesh of our Lord, they could be resisted and rejected in and through the power of that Spirit by which He was now entirely controlled. The temptations, therefore, while real temptations, were overcome, and Satan had to leave Him for a season, until he could think out and arrange temptations more subtle and cunning. If temptations could be presented which would come to Jesus through the medium of those He dearly loved, they might possibly divert Him from the strait and narrow path of absolute obedience to the Will of God.

He now came unto His own, but His own—with the exception of a "remnant"—received Him not. John the Baptist crowned and completed his life-work by pointing to Him as He walked, and saying concerning Him, "Behold the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sin of the world." Our Lord Himself used all the available means of bringing before the Israelites the broad facts of the case. His claims, either made openly or by implication, were such as to make it impossible for orthodox Jews to regard Him with indifference. These claims, made both in His teaching and in His miracles, are scattered throughout the Gospels. They include the following:—

He claimed that He was the Son of God: that He existed before Abraham: that God had sent Him

into the world, and that He had come directly from the bosom of the Father: that He had been sent into the world to fulfil the Scriptures, to reveal the Father, and to carry out the will of God by giving His life a ransom for many. That while He was David's son, He was also David's Lord, and would yet occupy the throne of the Lord, when they would see Him come from heaven in mighty power with all His holy angels: that then He would have the power to bestow great rewards upon His faithful servants: that He was the Son of Man and would come to judge the world of men; that before Him would be gathered all nations, when He would gradually divide them into two classes, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Further, that He would judge men by the Word which He spoke; that He would destroy all His enemies, and reward those on His left hand with everlasting punishment, and those on His right hand with everlasting life.

By His numerous and varied miracles, from the healing of the sick to the raising of the dead, He gave ample demonstration, both to friends and foes, both to Jew and Gentile, that He was a man who had authority from God to do as He thought right. By the nature of his teaching, and the matter He presented, and the claims which were implied, He left the people no option but the one verdict, "Never man spake like this man." He invited the weary and heavy laden to come to Him, and promised that He would give them rest, while He, at the same time, laid down for the guidance of His followers the most searching principles and the most stringent rules that the world has ever known. He boldly called atten-

tion to the fact that the standard of righteousness set up by the Pharisees was quite insufficient to meet His requirements.

In the Beatitudes He set before men an absolutely new ideal as the source of unfailing and perpetual happiness. In the Sermon on the Mount He set before all men a moral and spiritual charter for their guidance and daily conduct so elevated and so far beyond man's natural range of selfish thought that its precepts and injunctions have never been attempted by any government on earth, and indeed never will be until God shall awaken from the tomb Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the holy prophets, and shall establish them in power in Jerusalem as the human representatives of His divine government then in control. And when that parliament of perfect men applies the vital principles of that sermon as the basis of all its legislation, both for their own guidance and the guidance of their fellow-men, then there will be seen for the first time in a human government what real Christianity means.

But just as during the First Presence of our Lord He found the religious world full of hypocrites and controlled by selfish desires so opposed to real Christianity that it was morally impossible for the love of God to find any lodgment in their hearts, so it has been largely ever since, and so it is to-day in the beginning of His Second Presence. In view of the firm Jewish conviction that He would belong to their tribe, and also be descended from the royal line of David: and further, that He would more than restore their nation to the prestige which it enjoyed under David and Solomon, a right royal welcome to

their long-expected King should have been the order of the day, and more especially so when the One Who presented Himself was not only the son of David—a fact easily proven—He also claimed to be the Son of God. And that great claim, confirmed as it was by God on various occasions and in various ways, made inevitable either a warm reception on the one hand, or a bitter rejection on the other. And the warmth and the bitterness would be intensified as the Lord unfolded before God's people the greater (spiritual) favours which God was now presenting them through Jesus of Nazareth—His well-beloved Anointed. These favours, opened up and explained during His ministry, would be ratified and made good, following His death, resurrection and ascension.

He, as the divinely anointed Priest, was during His ministry, daily pouring out His (human) soul unto death in the works of mercy He was performing on all the sick and afflicted who came to Him. He was also the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, in daily having to meet the stubborn wills and rebellious hearts of God's people; as their hatred of Him and antipathy to Him became the more manifest as His love for them became the more urgent.

There could only be one termination to such a clash of wills and purposes—His destruction—or theirs. Not comprehending the time of their visitation, because of their failure to understand the true character of their Visitor, they speedily began to plot His death. Their condition of heart made them incapable of comprehending that His death as a man would be but the fulfilment and completion of His

sacrificial life on earth, and could have no bearing whatever upon His spirit-begotten life as the Priest after the order of Melchizedek. As the High Priest He had to be made divinely perfect through suffering, through meeting the opposition of sinners against Himself, and God had plainly shown in His Word that three and a half years would be occupied in the perfecting process. The mad hatred of the Jews against Him, however, was at times so bitter that they would have encompassed His death at a much earlier period, but for the overruling providence of God. Our Lord knew exactly the length of His earthly ministry, the work He had to do, and He faithfully and zealously performed it. Then He faced Gethsemane, the arrest, the trial, the mocking, the scourging, crucifixion and death, and on the cross He completed His sacrificial service. There He was forsaken by God, because He there had to take the sinner's place, and meet the sinner's everlasting doom. At the same time, with the fullest confidence He could offer His petition, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my *spirit*," well knowing that He, the Priest, had been well-pleasing to the Father in thus pouring out His soul unto death. He, as the Victim, there took man's place, but in the full assurance that He, the Priest, would be raised on the third day a glorious divine Being, with the power to make peace through the blood of His cross, and to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things in heaven, or things on earth.

His confidence in God was not misplaced. On the third day He was raised by the mighty power of God, and given all power in heaven and in earth. He

was, as we read in I Pet. iii, 18, "Put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit." He was therefore no longer flesh in any sense or degree, although He again manifested His pre-human power of creating a human body at will in order to show Himself to human beings. When He thus manifested Himself along with two angels to Abraham and Sarah, His host very naturally thought that he was entertaining three men : it was some time before Abraham discovered that in reality he had actually entertained angels unawares. Surely no one would argue that because our Lord then appeared in the body of a man, and ate human food, that the body He there exhibited in order to show Himself to Abraham and Sarah, was His true heavenly body. If it was it is inconceivable to us how it could have been transferred to the womb of the virgin ; but if we take our guidance from the prophet Daniel, we learn that these heavenly beings have the power to make themselves more or less glorious at will. By comparing chapter ix, 21, with chapter x, 4-8, we observe quite a change in the glory of the manifestation. Usually when angels manifested themselves to men they did so in a form similar to the human, and were therefore generally regarded as human beings until they gave proof that they possessed superhuman powers. The fact that our Lord appeared several times in a human body similar to that which died upon the cross is no proof, therefore, that He is now only a man. Indeed, we have the inspired assurance that "God hath highly exalted Him, and hath raised Him far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named."

What might be well termed the "visual proof" of His exaltation was given to Saul of Tarsus when on the way to Damascus. One glance at the risen Lord practically destroyed his eyesight, so overpowering was the divine glory. It was needful, however, to give the man who was yet to be a "chosen vessel" and an Apostle, the absolute proof that Jesus of Nazareth was no longer dead, but alive. Had our Lord appeared as a human being to Saul of Tarsus, it would have been no proof whatever to his sceptical mind that the one who so appeared was in reality Jesus of Nazareth. But when he had fallen to the earth blinded by the awful glory he surely heard the words which burned themselves into his very soul—"I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." From that moment the greatest fact in the life of the Apostle was the fact that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: . . . . And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (I Cor. xv.) When Paul says that he saw Him as of one "born out of due time" he simply means that he saw Jesus as all the saints will actually see Him in the resurrection of "the members of His body." The Apostle John confirms this when He says (I John iii, 2), "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him *as He is*."

Now, the beloved disciple must have seen our Lord's human body thousands of times. He also saw Him after His resurrection. Why then does he

say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," *if* "we are to be like Him?" Did He not have a body similar to other men? And after His resurrection did He not appear in a body exactly like the body which hung upon the cross? He surely did. But let us not forget that after His resurrection the human body in which our Lord appeared could be created in a moment, and dissolved in a moment. He thus manifested a superhuman power respecting the body of flesh which He did not manifest during His natural lifetime. And, in comparing this power with similar powers manifested by Gabriel and other angels, the conclusion seems inevitable, viz., that our Lord is now no longer human, nor is He in any sense controlled by human limitations. "In the days of His flesh" He lay under the necessity of pouring out His soul in "strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death," but in His resurrection as a glorious divine Being He has been given all power in heaven and in earth, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named. If God's people could see this glorious truth in all its beauty, it would save them from some very foolish expectations connected with our Lord's Second Advent.

When considering this subject of our Lord's resurrection and the various manifestations of Himself which He gave to His disciples in order that thus they might become effective witnesses of that great fact, we do well to visualise the reasonableness of the early scepticism of the Apostles and others, and how the enlightened judgments of reasonable men had to be convinced. If the Apostles were of humble origin

they were by no means credulous simpletons. They knew that their Master had died. His resurrection was something outside the scope of their expectations, and we can rejoice that their scepticism demanded, and received, so " many infallible proofs." When an honest sceptic is at last convinced he usually exhibits an unshakeable and imperishable faith, and such strong characters were needed to fill the Apostolic office.

We now observe that the term " Son of Man " was the official title appropriated by our Lord because He had come to be the " Hefty Brother "—Goel, Kinsman, Redeemer—to a weak, sin-stained, ruined and bankrupt human family. It was never used by Him in order to convey the thought that He would always be subject to human limitations, as of necessity He had to be limited " in the days of His flesh." The human body which was given Him for sacrifice has been offered in sacrifice, for, as He Himself tells us, He " gave His flesh for the life of the world."

He had also proved His worthiness of being made the Mediator of the New Covenant, because by His death He had provided the blood which alone could seal it and so make it operative between God and the houses of Israel and Judah. And had it been God's due time for so doing undoubtedly He would have done so. Satan would then have been bound; the Israelites would have been " fished " and " hunted " back to their own land; His enemies would all have been conquered, and all evil-doers would have been corrected, suppressed, or destroyed. The Kingdom of God would then have been established firmly in the earth under the authority of earth's rightful King.

That was what the Apostles had clearly anticipated. It was to realise that great ideal that they had gladly laboured, hence their natural query :—"Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Both the Lord and they knew that God through His servants had clearly and definitely foretold this coming restoration, and in His reply the Lord did not suggest that the kingdom of God would never come. Nor did He say that the Apostles' outlook was wrong. Their outlook was clearly in harmony with God's Word, as understood by natural men, and had it been God's will to make our Lord the sole spiritual Ruler over the world the natural outlook of the Apostles would, in due time, have been fully realised. But as the Father had determined to give His Son a Church, a Bride, like unto Himself, there was to be an intervening dispensation of the Spirit. This, beginning at Pentecost, would open up to all those anointed by the Spirit the heavenly and spiritual blessings contained in the Word of God. The Lord, therefore, at that moment took no steps to clear up their difficulty, but merely said :—"It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" : hence His command :—"Tarry ye at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

The ten days of fervent prayer and meditation on all the great truths He had imparted to them during His ministry prepared them for the blessings of Pentecost. Prior to their anointing by the Spirit they were only good, natural men, with a natural

understanding of the Scriptures. But when the Holy Spirit came upon them then they understood spiritual things, and could utilise all the truths they had learned in setting forth, clearly and boldly, all the facts of the Gospel.

And what are those facts? It surely behoves us to know, as only by such knowledge can we co-operate intelligently with our Lord in the work He is now doing. Ignorance certainly does not fit anyone to be a good servant, nor does it tend to rapid promotion with an employer. (See Prov. xxii, 29, and Matt. xxv, 30.)

Is it as some seem to think, that our Lord is now doing the very best He can to save a world of lost sinners, but is incessantly being thwarted in His gracious purpose by the power of the evil one over the hearts of men? Is it that our Lord is now utilising all the means of grace at His disposal, but that these are quite insufficient to meet the deceptions of the god of this world, who, in spite of all our Lord is doing, is still able to deceive vast numbers by putting darkness for light, and light for darkness? So a great number of God's servants think and teach : hence the one eternal slogan :—"Money, money, money, more money and still more money, that we may then secure the workers and the means for conquering the world for Jesus."

Thank God, their thoughts are nothing like God's thoughts, nor are their ways like His ways, and their childish plans for the salvation of souls will never merit His commendation, being, indeed, very far astray : as if He, the Creator of all things, was now under the painful necessity of making a poor mouth

to the poor of this world who are rich in faith, and must needs send out an army of beggars to milk the goats! But, they say, "souls are perishing"—as if souls had never perished before the nineteenth century. Millions of souls had perished before our Lord was born: millions have perished since who never heard of the only Name given among men whereby they could be saved; and if this life ends all probation, then all these uncounted millions of souls have perished for ever. It is only confusing to the intellect to raise a cloud of cheap and mawkish sentiment before such an issue. These uncounted myriads are either doomed for ever, or else there is a hope for them in our Lord's death and in His coming Millennial reign. Only then may we expect to see a great many Scriptures fulfilled, such as the following:—"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." (John v, 28-29.) (Note.—The word "damnation" is a mistranslation of the Greek word that is properly translated "judgment" in verses 27 and 30.)

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii, 30-31.)

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are

you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (I Cor. vi, 2-3.)

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx, 12-15.)

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order (i.e., troop or company): Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be All in all." (I Cor. xv, 21-28; see also Micah iv, 1-4.)

As will be readily seen from these and numerous other Scriptures, the only hope for all the non-elect

lies in the coming millennial reign of our Lord and His saints over the earth. Not until then will He, as the Mediator of the New Covenant, make known unto all men the Law of God, and the perfect obedience to that law which God requires from all His intelligent creatures. Up to the present we have ample proof of the truth of Paul's words :—"All men have not faith," and all those who can not, or will not, believe the Word of God must be content to "wait and see." Our appeal is to those who have faith, and who are willing to search the Scriptures in order that they may be grounded and settled in the faith once delivered to the saints. The question before such comes to be, "What is the Lord's great purpose concerning mankind during this present Gospel Dispensation?"

We find a very good answer to our query in Acts xv, 14 :—"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take *out of them* a people for his name." We shall presently seek to ascertain what this summary of Peter's address really means. Before doing so, it will be well to observe that had the Chairman at that great conference been labouring under the common theory that salvation is either now or never he certainly missed a golden opportunity to set forth the solemn truth. He did not make one tearful remark about the awful condition of the poor heathen, nor did he suggest that the Apostles should go out and collect five hundred thousand shekels in order to build and equip a missionary training college for the training of their young men for the work. He gave no hint that such a college was necessary, nor did he show

the necessity for raising an endowment fund, nor did he make a special appeal to the wealthy brethren to keep that constantly before them. In that old-fashioned Gospel address there is an entire absence of that commonplace modern appeal respecting the greatness of the work, and the prime necessity of laying down, first of all, a solid financial foundation in order to encourage the brightest of their young men to enter the work. Neither did he suggest that God was now doing the best He could with the means at His disposal, but that His work was greatly handicapped for the want of men and money, and that in order to get the men we must first collect the money, so as to give the necessary inducement to young men to enter the work.

James knew perfectly well that those who had gone out into the work had done so *in response to the Lord's call*, and that when the Lord had sent them forth He had promised them nothing beyond the necessary food and clothing: and further, that at the close of His ministry He had asked them the plain question, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing." (Luke xxii, 35.) James knew that "the same Lord over all is *rich unto all that call upon Him*" (Rom. x, 12), because He has been given "all power, both in heaven and in earth," and was therefore well able both to equip and provide for His servants. And his summary of Peter's address, while neither new nor startling to its first hearers, is worthy of our deep consideration. It embodies a great fundamental doctrine which has been almost entirely lost sight of by God's people,

viz., the doctrine that the main purpose of the Gospel Age is to find a people worthy to be made the Bride of Christ. It really means that the Gospel Age has been devoted to preaching the Word and giving the witness, but more with the object in view of finding a "Bride for the Lamb" than with the hope of converting the world. It means, therefore, in its primary sense, the finding of a people for the name of Christ, i.e., Christians. But as the term "Christian" has now a very much wider range of meaning than when first applied to the brethren in Antioch, it behoves us to probe the matter a little more deeply.

A suggestive light is thrown upon the matter from the statement recorded in Revelation xiv, 1:—"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads." Now, God is love, and the clear suggestion therefore is, that only those will be found worthy of standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion who have the name of God—Love—written in their characters. In the same connection we are reminded of the angel from the east who comes with the seal of the living God in order to seal the servants of God in their foreheads. (Rev. vii.) And in Eph. i, 13, we are told that this seal is "the Holy Spirit of the Promise." We infer, therefore, that the Gospel Age has been, in a special sense, devoted to the work of finding those who become so devoted to the will of God that in process of time His Holy Spirit entirely dominates the whole life—the will, judgment, character. The love of God so

controls thought, word and deed, that it can be truly said that "the love of God has been shed abroad in the heart," and that the mind of God has been exhibited in the character—written in the forehead. And the implication clearly is that God requires such an intense degree of devotion and consecration to His will that nineteen hundred years have been occupied in finding even the small number of one hundred and forty-four thousand. Taking nineteen hundred years as the length of time involved, we find that out of all the millions of professing Christians on an average only about seventy-six have each year made their calling and election *sure* as prospective candidates to joint-heirship with Christ in His kingdom. That one fact should make God's people pause and think, and ask themselves the straight question, "Does my view of God's purpose during the present Gospel Age agree with all the scriptural facts?" If not, then sanctified common sense naturally demands a revised outlook—the revision to be based upon the facts of revelation and no longer upon the theories of men. The foregoing, of course, has no reference to "the great company which no man could number," and who "come up out of the great tribulation"—a brief period in the Gospel Age, near the end, and still future. From the context it is manifest that the "great multitude" of Rev. vii, 9, is quite distinct from the "hundred and forty-four thousand" mentioned in verses 4-8.

The first Adam was a man, and his bride was a woman. The Second Adam is the Lord from heaven, and His Bride will be made like unto Him.

And just as God formed a bride for the first Adam out of living material taken from his side, so in like manner He has formed a Bride for the Second Adam out of those who have "presented their bodies a living sacrifice," and who, by faith, eat His flesh and drink His blood. These are taken by God and baptised into Christ, and daily yield to Him their members as instruments of righteousness. These are "crucified with Him" and "die with Him," and look forward with great longing to the time when "He shall change our vile body, and make it like unto His glorious body." (Phil. iii, 21.) They are assured that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be (like)." We rest content in the knowledge that "when He shall appear, we shall be *like Him*."

We now observe that practically all the warnings, precepts and exhortations in the New Testament are directed to this class of believers who not only have been justified by faith, but, on that as a solid foundation, have taken the further step of full consecration to the will of God. As a consequence, they have been given access to all the spiritual blessings which are in Christ Jesus, and can rejoice in the hope of being found worthy of being given even the glory of God. Says the Apostle, Rom. v:—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"—the first essential in every true Christian life, but by no means the last. For if "justification by faith" and its grand corollary "peace with God" were merely the end in view, the Apostle might well have now drawn his epistle to a close, instead of which he is really only

beginning, and continues thus :—" By Whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." We note in passing, that the words " by faith " are not found in some ancient authorities, and evidently should be omitted, because the believer's access into this further favour is obtained, not so much on the basis of " faith " as on the fact of his consecration to the will of God, baptism into Christ, and anointing by the Spirit. For how could any believer, not yet begotten and anointed by the Spirit, " rejoice in hope of the *glory of God?*" If we are ever to realise the " glory of God " in the Apostolic meaning of the phrase, we must first, of necessity, be anointed by the Spirit. Then, but not till then, shall we know what it means to " *glory in tribulations also* : knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." Hope of what? salvation? Yes, surely; but a very special form of salvation it is, something far beyond the " common salvation " from the guilt of sin which God now graciously offers as a free gift to all men. Not that we can *purchase* this " great salvation " by some inherent merit of our own : no, it can only be " won " as a " prize " by fulfilling the conditions of discipleship after admission to the school of Christ.

The thought of learning and gradually advancing in a school of Christian experiences is well borne out by the Apostle's whole statement, which clearly implies progress. Thus it is that we can glory in tribulations, because we are led to see that only these tribulations, rightly met, can develop in us the

necessary patience; that the patience, so developed, does a "perfect work," because it enables us to meet, in a right spirit, the various experiences which God sees fit to send. These experiences and trials are just like so many preliminary examinations. If they are successfully met they prepare us for the greater trials, wherein we must show that we are animated by a hope that is never put to shame because "the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

"For *if* we have been planted together in the likeness of His death (I John iii, 16) we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now *if* we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." (Rom. vi, 5-8.)

It is well for God's people to realise the deep import of these "*IFS*." Such Scriptures can only apply to those believers in whom they are being fulfilled. If we know by actual experience that we are daily being crucified to the world (Gal. vi, 14), and, like Jesus upon the cross, are suspended between heaven and earth, we are prepared for the Apostle's reasoning (Rom. vii, 4-6), viz. :—"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to

bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of the letter."

And what is the practical outcome? The inspired answer is given in chap. viii, 5-13, as follows:—"They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.* And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness . . . For *if* ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but *if* ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live."

We observe also the important "if" in verse 17. Paul reasons thus:—"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; *if* so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

The glory will result from the fact that the members of His Body on earth are to be identified

with Him in the glory of His Kingdom, when to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Membership in a body implies the closest possible relationship, and the nearness of the glorified relationship will altogether depend upon the nearness of the relationship in suffering maintained during our period of trial here below. "Bear the cross and win the crown" is something more than the neat phrasing of a pious sentiment. It is indeed the literal truth.

While our Lord set forth the many aspects of divine truth recorded in the Gospels, yet the deeper phases, illustrating the closest possible relationship between Himself and His consecrated followers, are set forth mainly in the Gospel of John. After hearing the charge levelled against Him that His miracle of feeding five thousand was not so very wonderful after all, in view of the fact that under Moses their ancestors had been fed for forty years, our Lord replied :—"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, *and are dead.* This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof *and not die.* I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

"The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' Then Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, *ye have no life in you.* Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, *hath eternal*

life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood. *dwelleth in Me and I in him.* As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even *he shall live by Me*'." (John vi, 49-57.)

Now the Jews very rightly asked, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" and it is a great pity that those who claim to be God's people have paid so little attention to our Lord's explanation. If, as a large number have believed and maintained, it is only when a man-ordained priest has uttered certain Latin words over bread and wine that what is called the "substance" of the bread and wine is then changed into what is called the "substance" of our Lord's body and blood, it seems a great pity that our Lord did not give that very important point in His explanation. Our Lord well knew that God had strictly forbidden the eating or drinking of blood. (Lev. vii, 27.) He therefore must have known and foreseen the strong revulsion of feeling against Himself which His words were bound to create in the minds of His hearers. While He doubtless felt it very keenly it could have been no great surprise to Him that "Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is an hard saying; who can hear it?'" and that "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." (Verses 60 and 66.)

Now Jesus must not only have foreseen how very offensive His words would be to orthodox Jews, but He must also have known that none of His followers

would ever be asked to literally drink of His blood. Indeed, such an inference is so self-evident that it is most unlikely that any of those Jews who that day forsook our Lord ever expected that they would be asked to drink His blood. They doubtless understood His words to imply that in some way they would be dependent on Him for the blessing of everlasting life, and that apart from Him they could have no life. Thus it was that when Jesus asked the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" that Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? *Thou hast the words of eternal life.*" And it was because the Apostles were sure that Jesus was that "Anointed, the Son of the living God" that they were prepared to follow Him, and to accept all His teaching, even though but dimly understood at the moment. And when, at the close of the Passover Supper, He took the "cup of blessing," gave thanks, and said, "This is my blood of the New Covenant," there is not the slightest hint that either He or His Apostles thought that the "substance" of the wine had been changed to the "substance" of His blood. For if so, was the blood which then flowed through His veins merely "accidents?" and if nothing but "accidents" was it of any real value in making atonement for our sins? But if the "substance" of His blood was at that moment indissolubly identified with its "accidents," what necessity was there for the creation of the "substance" of His blood in a cup of wine? There is no indication that the "substance" of the wine was changed, or that it was offered up as a "High Mass" for the sins of the Apostles.

As it is naturally impossible for the flesh and blood of a living creature to be separated while the creature is alive, the Scriptures nowhere convey the thought that our Lord first offered up His flesh and afterwards His blood, but rather that "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," and that this He did once for all" when He "*offered up Himself.*" When, therefore, He took the loaf and *broke it*, and said to His disciples, "This is my body, which is broken for you," is it not manifest that He is speaking prophetically of what was about to be accomplished? He, as the Passover Lamb, was about to be slain. His blood was to be the safeguard of God's people, and the means of admission into God's family. On the basis of the sprinkled blood the various members of God's family could feast upon the broken body of the slain Lamb. The Lord, therefore, took the unleavened bread, broke it, and used the broken pieces as the fitting emblem of the fact that His body would be broken on behalf of God's people, and that henceforth they were to eat the bread in remembrance of Him, and of the greater deliverance accomplished on their behalf by means of His death.

He then took the "cup of blessing" and gave thanks; but when He told His followers to drink it as if it were His Own blood, He is manifestly going outside the Passover type, as the blood of the lamb was not sprinkled on any member of the family—only on the outside of the door. And the Lord gives us the correct line of thought when He says, "This is my blood of the *New Covenant,*" for we must ever remember that while it was the

proper observance of the Passover which enabled the Israelites to leave Egypt in safety, and so made possible a covenant between God and themselves, that nevertheless that covenant was not actually made until the people had come to mount Sinai.

In Exod. xxiv, 5-8, we are told how the Old Covenant was ratified. We read that Moses "sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrified peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

Now some might very naturally infer that when our Lord there gave the emblem of His blood to His followers to "drink" that He is in that act symbolically sealing the New Covenant with His blood. That doctrine has been generally held by God's people, as it seemed to be clearly taught in the New Testament. There are, however, a number of scriptural facts which are directly opposed to such a theory, and suggest to us that the sealing of the New Covenant is still future. Some of these facts are presented in the chapter on "God's Judgment on Natural Israel," which are sufficient to cast doubt upon the generally accepted theory: we will now consider some other facts.

The first fact to be considered is found in Lev.

vii, 27 :—" Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." In order to give due weight to this feature of God's law we do well to remind ourselves of what our Lord said, viz. :—" Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Thus seeking to give this feature of God's law its due weight, we connect it with our Lord's words in John vi, 53 :—" Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no *life in you.* Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

Uniting and interlocking these Scriptures, as God evidently intended His people to do, we are faced with the seeming paradox that although we can only have " life in ourselves " by drinking the blood of Christ, that nevertheless, in the very act of so doing, we are, as it were, signing our own death-warrant. We must, in the very act of drinking His blood, place ourselves in a position before God where He " shall cut us off from our people," i.e., God's people. We must, in fact, " die with Christ." And that solemn fact explains a great deal of the New Testament which otherwise is very hard to understand. Heb. xiii, 13, is a very good example. There we read :—" Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." To understand the full depth of meaning in the foregoing exhortation we should remember that the " camp " is never used as an emblem of the " world," but always as the " place " or " con-

dition" of God's people. And all of God's people, even the very best, are at times sorely tempted to remain in the camp, and to enjoy all the blessings of fellowship which the "camp" offers and confers.

God had set forth this feature of His law respecting the drinking of blood knowing that it would be fulfilled in the "members of Christ's Body." He has given us this feature of His law in order to teach us the great spiritual lesson that all of us who would be brought to the point of full consecration to His perfect will, and who would be taken by Him and baptised into Christ, must from that moment be "crucified with Him," and must "die with Him." And the promise to the "overcomer" is that "He shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. ii, 11.) Once we were "dead in Adam," but have now been made "alive in Christ." If from that moment we are faithful to our vow of consecration unto death, our "second death" will become but the venue to "everlasting life."

What, then, does the Lord mean by saying that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood before we can have "life in ourselves?" We observe, first of all, that the words are no more to be taken literally than a great many other expressions to be found in the Scriptures. Thus, when Paul says in Rom. vi, 3, that "so many of us have been baptised into Jesus Christ" he cannot mean that these brethren had been "literally" baptised into Jesus Christ. It is manifest that his words are used symbolically. Likewise when he says "I am crucified with Christ," it is self-evident that he had never suffered literal crucifixion. God's consecrated

people, then, no more literally drink the blood of Christ than they literally are baptised into Him, and are crucified with Him. These expressions, as well as many others, are designed to convey to our minds great spiritual truths and realities when we have come to the years of spiritual discernment, because "the invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made."

We observe, further, that our Lord was, in a supreme sense, a "Teacher in parables and dark sayings." We read that "without a parable spake He not unto them." How appropriate then that He Who always spoke in parables should, at the close of His last meal before His passion, use the bread and the wine as emblems of great spiritual realities! Why should His words be taken literally any more than the words of His parables?

We observe, thirdly, that we have no proof that He indorsed the ancient Greek philosophy that matter was made up of "substance" and "accidents," and that while the "accidents" were always changing the "substance" never changed. But even if He did there is not the slightest hint that He would confer upon a few of those who claimed to be His servants the power to reverse this "law," so that when they had uttered certain Latin words over bread and wine that then, while the "accidents" would remain as before, the "substance" of the bread and the wine would be changed into the "substance" of the flesh and the blood of our Lord. (Even if Aristotle's formula could be applied to simple elements, we should remember that human blood is not a "simple

element." It is a marvellous and complex structure, containing not merely one element, but many.)

We observe, fourthly, that there is not the slightest Scriptural evidence that any one of His followers was to have precedence over another in the dispensing of the elements of bread and wine. There is no Scriptural rule laid down as to whether elders or deacons, or any of the other brethren, were first to give thanks for the bread, then dispense it to their brethren; and then to give thanks for the wine before dispensing it to the brethren. Nor are the words of thanks and blessing given in the Scriptures. Nor have we any proof that our Lord spoke the words in Latin, but even if He did there is no injunction laid upon His people that they were to thank and bless God in Latin. The language of their oppressors was by no means favoured by the common people of Palestine to whom our Lord was constantly speaking, and it would have been foolish to have prejudiced them against His message by delivering it in a language which they hated. It is practically certain that our Lord spoke in Aramaic. Had any of these things been essential to our salvation then clear instructions would have been found in the Word of God, for it is quite sufficient to "make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. iii, 16-17.) And that being so it is surely the height of folly for God's people to resort to the unproved dogma of an ancient heathen materialist in order to secure some semblance of a foundation for a supposed miracle which is also outside the realm of proof.

The practical reasons why all these doctrinal delusions crept in among God's people are soon discovered. When Satan, the god of this world, finds God's people unfaithful to the Words of their Lord and Master he also finds them in a condition of mind which is very susceptible to his temptations. And having lost the power of the Holy Spirit they are peculiarly susceptible to any temptation which seems to promise them "power." Thus it was that when the great "falling away" began, it was naturally accompanied by, and manifested itself in, a desire on the part of elders and deacons to grasp and to wield more "power." And in the most unseemly struggle which followed, and which raged for some centuries, the full honours of a most inglorious victory at last lay with the "ruling elder" in the city of Rome. And to extend his sphere of influence and to make his position still more secure it was needful to share out some of the spoils of his victory. To that end he wisely made use of an unproved heathen dogma in order to give some semblance of reality to the power which he now professed to confer upon the Roman priesthood of working multitudes of unseen miracles. (It may be noted in passing that all the miracles recorded in the Scriptures were quite manifest to the senses of ordinary people: not one of them could be questioned.)

This "power" of the "ruling elder" in the city of Rome was thus stated in the course of a long letter addressed to Cardinal Gasparri, and published in the first week of June, 1929. It is a reply to several statements made by Signor Mussolini, the

Premier, and in it the following claims are made, viz. :—" It is always the supreme Pontiff who intervenes and negotiates in the fulness of the sovereignty of the Catholic Church, which he does not represent, but which he impersonates by a direct Divine mandate.

" It is not, therefore, the Catholic organisation in Italy which is subject to the authority of the State, but it is the Pontiff, the Supreme Sovereign authority of the Church, who judges and disposes what might or can be done for the greater glory of God and for the greatest good of souls."

To the remarkable claim which is made in the foregoing statement we would humbly suggest that if the Pope really has a " direct Divine mandate " to " impersonate " the Catholic Church, and " the Supreme Sovereign authority " to " judge and dispose " of " what might or can be done for the greater glory of God and for the greatest good of souls," that the document setting forth the terms of the " Divine mandate " should be at once published, so that the ignorant may be instructed and the sceptical convinced. There is a Book, now widely circulated, which contains quite a number of these " Divine mandates." It is called " The Bible," and those who first received these " Divine mandates " were never averse to submitting the proofs. The proofs were ample, and convinced multitudes. Indeed, the Apostles gave their lives in making known to their fellowmen the terms of their commission. In like manner, we believe that an accurate knowledge of this " Divine mandate " would give the necessary weight and authority to

the following questions and answers in the Roman Catholic (American) Catechism. To all those who take the Bible to be the one and only Divine authority the answers are most unsatisfactory. We read :—

Ques.—What is the holy eucharist?

Ans.—It is a sacrament which contains the body and blood, the soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ, under the forms and appearances of bread and wine.

Q.—Is it not bread and wine which is first put upon the altar for the celebration of the Mass?

A.—Yes, it is always bread and wine till the priest pronounces the words of consecration during the Mass.

Q.—What happens by these words?

A.—The bread is changed into the body of Jesus Christ, and the wine into His blood.

Q.—What is this change called?

A.—It is called transubstantiation, that is to say, a change of one substance into another.

Q.—What is the Mass?

A.—The Mass is the perpetual sacrifice of the new law, in which Christ our Lord offers himself by the hands of the priest, in an unbloody manner, under the appearances of bread and wine, to his Heavenly Father, as he once offered himself on the cross in a bloody manner.

Q.—What is the difference between the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifice of the Cross?

A.—The sacrifice of the Mass is essentially the same sacrifice as that of the Cross; the only difference is in the manner of offering.

Q.—What effects has the Mass as a sacrifice of propitiation?

A.—By it we obtain from the divine mercy, first, Graces of contrition and repentance for the forgiveness of sins; and second, Remission of temporal punishments deserved for sins.

Q.—To whom are the fruits of the Mass applied?

A.—The general fruits are applied to the whole Church, both the living and the dead; the special fruits are applied, first, Chiefly to the priest who celebrates the Mass; next, To those for whom in particular he offers it up; and, thirdly, To those who assist at it with devotion."

The same authority says :—" He who sacrifices is a priest; the sensible thing which is sacrified is called the victim; the place where it is sacrificed is called the altar. These four—priest, victim, altar and sacrifice—are inseparable : each one of them calls for the others."

Explaining the ceremony, it says of the priest :—" Then he pronounces the mysterious words of consecration, adores, making a genuflection, and elevates the Sacred Body and the Sacred Blood above his head. At the ringing of the bell the people adore on their knees, and strike their breasts in token of repentance for their sins. The priest begs of God graciously to accept the sacrifice."

In Canon 3 of the Canons of the Council of Trent we are taught that " If any one shall say that the Mass is only a service of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice made on the Cross, and not a propitiatory offering; or that it only benefits him who receives it, and ought not

to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities: let him be accursed."

Before the foregoing curse is pronounced, we would suggest to all whom it may concern the following considerations:—

I. We deny the possibility of the creation of the "substance" of matter, without the "accidents" of matter. Science affords no proof for holding and maintaining such a doctrine. Holy Writ is likewise devoid of the slightest evidence in support of such a doctrine.

II. Even if it be argued that it was possible for the Supreme Being to exhibit such a power, we deny that He ever conferred a like power upon a human being.

III. We deny that the creation of human flesh by itself, apart from bodily organism and the presence of the life-giving blood-stream is a "victim" in the Scriptural sense of that term. The suggested meaning which is thus given to the old English word "victim" is, therefore, entirely false, and can only tend to create in the mind which receives it a most perverted view of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity. We are, therefore, compelled to reject such a meaning as being appropriate to the word "victim," and are also compelled to reject the inference which is drawn from the false meaning so given.

IV. We deny that the creation of human blood by itself, and which has never flowed through the arteries and veins of a creature, is "sacrificial blood" in the Scriptural sense of that term. We

believe that in order to become sacrificial blood it must of necessity be the life-stream of a creature, from which it is drawn in the act of sacrifice, after which it is presented as an offering for sin. The suggested meaning which is thus given to the old English word "sacrifice" is, therefore, entirely false, and tends to destroy in the mind which receives it the possibility of ever correctly understanding the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. There is not a single typical sacrifice under the Old Covenant which could be taken to support such a theory. We are, therefore, compelled to reject both the false meaning which has been given and the inference which has been drawn from the false meaning. We may also observe in passing that when our Lord took first the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and then gave it to his disciples to eat before He took the cup of wine, and gave thanks for it, that in thus separating the two He was certainly looking forward to the separation of the two which would be accomplished by the fact of His death. It should be self-evident that His flesh and His blood could not thus be separated so long as He was alive in the flesh. And at the time when He thus gave thanks, first for the bread and then for the cup, His Own flesh and blood were united together as they ever must be in all living creatures.

V. We deny that God ever laid upon His people the obligation to literally eat human flesh and thereby to make themselves into a congregation of cannibals.

VI. We believe that if the flesh so eaten is indeed the flesh of a "sin offering" that it is gross

sacrilege and a grievous sin in the sight of God to eat of it: "for the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp." (Heb. xiii, 11.) No human being ever had the right to eat the flesh of a sin-offering, and our Lord, as the Passover Lamb, was not a sin-offering. In the type the question of sin did not arise. It was a feast of love and fellowship based upon complete exemption and deliverance from an active judgment. And further, those animals which were slaughtered in order to provide the blood which sealed the Old Covenant were not sin-offerings. They were peace-offerings and burnt-offerings. The question of sin did not arise, because God never makes covenants with enemies and rebels—only with friends. When we thus meet to commemorate our Lord's death for us, we are met to commemorate His love for God, which is the burnt-offering aspect; and in thus being able to meet together in fellowship and love, exempt from the active judgment of God, we give an open demonstration of "our peace," which is the peace-offering aspect. In the observance of the Lord's Supper, then, the question of sin does not arise, and when we by faith eat His flesh and drink His blood we are observing the burnt-offering and peace-offering aspects of His sacrifice, which naturally both follow and flow from His high-priestly application of His blood as a sin-offering after His ascension into the Most Holy for that purpose.

VII. We deny that the bread and the wine should be worshipped and adored. Appropriate

offerings to God were "holy," but never were worshipped. When the disciples took down our Lord's dead body from the cross they did not worship it—they buried it. When Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness he did not command the Israelites to worship it: he exhorted them to look at it. (See II Kings, xviii, 4.)

VIII. We deny that the blood of a sin-offering can have any efficacy in the sight of Divine Justice until it has been brought into the Most Holy by the High Priest, and there presented as the token of the fit and proper sacrifice which has already been accomplished. Our Lord is quite emphatic on this point. He said:—"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." (John xvi, 7.) The implication is clear, and we believe that had it been possible for any Priest to have offered an efficacious sin-offering to Divine Justice while on this earth, that He could have done so. His words imply that it was impossible for Him to do so until He actually had ascended into the presence of Divine Justice with the tokens of His sacrifice made on earth. Then, but not till then, did He make reconciliation between God and man. Peter is quite clear on the point. In Acts ii, 33, we read, as a part of his Pentecostal sermon:—"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." And Peter's declaration is supported by Heb. ix, 12, where we read that "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal

redemption." And also by Heb. x, 14-15, where we read :—" For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." These Scriptures clearly teach that the offering of Christ's blood brought eternal redemption to believers, and that the proof of this was shown in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

IX. Even if it were true that the bread and the wine actually did become the body and the blood of our Lord, where and when did the priest receive a commission from God to put His well-beloved Son to death—to immolate Him upon the altar? In thus putting his Lord and Master to death, does he not unwittingly exhibit himself as the follower of those Jews and Romans who first put our Lord to death, and whom Stephen calls His " betrayers and murderers," and whom Peter charged with killing the Prince of life? While God's people recognise that in the plan of God, Jesus had to die for sinful men, yet nowhere are they commanded to go and put Him to death. Respecting the betrayer we are told that before he did his deadly work " Satan entered into him." And our Lord, in pronouncing his doom, said that " it had been good for that man if he had never been born." Now, why did the Lord pronounce such a doom upon His betrayer if He has granted to other servants the right to immolate Him upon their altars? Respecting those Jews who hated Him and who secured His death, He told them plainly that they were of their father the devil, and asked them the solemn question :— " How can you escape the damnation of hell?"

Does not the priest see the awful position he is assuming by thus causing his Lord to come upon his altar, taking Him in his hands, and then putting Him to death by immolating Him upon the altar? Is not the priest, by such an act, "crucifying to himself the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame?" So it would seem if it were really true. But we are very glad that the claims which have been made for the Roman Priesthood are not true. We believe that "Christ dieth no more" (Rom. vi, 9), and that for the very good reason that His death on Calvary has brought to us "eternal redemption." We are bound to believe, therefore, that any doctrine which would in any degree render nugatory the eternal efficacy of that all-atoning sacrifice to be a terrible delusion and a snare, and that its practical effect must always be to utterly pervert before the minds of men the pure and simple Gospel of the grace of God. Examined in the light of the Scriptures, we believe that we have shown that the doctrine which is presented in the "Sacrifice of the Mass" to be a most pernicious falsehood, and utterly subversive of true Christianity. We believe that the early Reformers were fully justified in regarding it as "the abomination that maketh desolate." (Dan. xii, 11.)

We will now seek to ascertain from the Scriptures just in what way God's people are made "able servants of the New Covenant." To that end we derive a great deal of help from a study of what took place at the inauguration and sealing of the Old Covenant. There we are told that Moses—who certainly typifies our Lord—"sent young men of the

children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord." (Ex. xxiv.) Now, while the whole camp was in outward harmony with God and His servant Moses on that day, yet these young men were sent by Moses to render a very important service towards ratifying the covenant between God and the people. We would suggest that they typify God's consecrated people—the Apostles and others who became "new creatures in Christ Jesus," and who have been used from Pentecost till now in carrying forward the purposes of God. And just as these young men were able servants of the Old Covenant, even so in like manner may God's people become "able servants of the New Covenant."

We next observe that these young men had nothing whatever to do with any "sin offering." Their service was limited to "burnt offerings and peace offerings," and clearly typified the work of the Apostles and others who called attention to what the Lord had already done, and the blessed consequences which had flowed from the application of His all-sufficient sin-offering. It was because the sin-offering had been efficacious in meeting the needs of sinful men, that the burnt-offering and peace-offering aspects of our Lord's great sacrifice could then be presented, and by its acceptance the believer immediately became the recipient of God's favour.

We now remark a very important feature. "Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar." We would suggest that these "basons" which received half of the blood were designed to typify the

"earthen vessels" of all those who become "new creatures in Christ Jesus," and who, by faith, now "drink" the blood of Christ as the "members of His Body."

The blood which was there put in "basons" was not intended to remain forever in the "basons." It was intended to be sprinkled on the people (verse 8), and the basons were simply a means to an end. The Lord's blood, which we, by faith, drink, is really designed by God to ultimately seal the New Covenant. But it has not yet done so, because it is still in the antitypical "basons," and of necessity must be there until "He shall change our vile body, and make it like unto His glorious body." During their earthly life God's people need the blood every moment in order that they may thus "present their bodies a *living sacrifice*"—not a "dead" or "unclean" sacrifice. It is the presence of the blood of Christ which alone makes them "holy, acceptable unto God," and enables them to render this "reasonable service." (Rom. xii, 1.) The New Covenant, therefore, cannot be sealed so long as the "members of His Body" are still in the flesh.

What seems to have been a great stumbling-block to a number of God's people is the long period of time which has been occupied in finding and perfecting the comparatively small number who are at last found worthy of being made "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" in the glory of His millennial kingdom. Had that feature of God's plan been accomplished in fifty years, and followed at once by the glorification of the Church, the binding of Satan, and the establishment of God's kingdom in

power and great glory, people in general would have had no difficulty in understanding the necessary interregnum between the Jewish Age and its natural antitype—the Millennial Age. But frail mortals have a real difficulty in grasping the breadth of the thoughts of One to Whom a thousand years are but "as a watch in the night." And the long period of the interregnum has seemed to their minds to be the last age of Divine Grace, whereas it is but the necessary preliminary, albeit a lengthy one, to the Age of Grace. And the long period of time involved but shows the great care which God has taken in selecting those who are to be His "channels of mercy" when the time comes for Him to "sprinkle many nations" with the "blood of the Covenant." (Isa. lii, 13-15.)

God's people are naturally inclined to apply all the warnings, exhortations and judgments to the unconverted, whereas the various portions of the Bible were expressly written for God's Own people. Our Lord did not invite anyone to follow Him under the glamour of false hopes. His terms of discipleship are made quite clear in many passages of the New Testament, notably in Luke xiv, 26-33. So many of those who claim to be God's people, when their attention is called to these stern passages, begin to hate the faithful preacher, instead of remembering that the preacher has but little to do beyond calling their attention to what the Lord and His Apostles have uttered.

He said to His Apostles, and through them to us :—"In the world ye shall have tribulation," and all those who have been baptised into Him find

these words to be true. No mere formal acknowledgment of His Lordship can strengthen them to meet the severe and heavy trials incidental to their "high calling." They must become to Him as dear and precious as the members of His body. He must become to them their Head, to will, direct, control. As His pure and perfect blood animated His natural body, so by faith must they appropriate the merit of His pure life, freely sacrificed on their behalf. Thus, following His death, resurrection, ascension and intercession for them, could they, on the basis of a supreme love for Him, be taken by God and baptised into Him. Thus would they "live in Him," because the merit and life-giving value of His shed blood, could be appropriated every moment of their lives by a living faith in their Lord and Head.

All believers should understand the fundamental doctrine thus presented, but only those believers who are "in Christ" can possibly manifest "His life." And our Lord is most emphatic that none have life until they have taken such a step, and have realised the vital experience. He says :—"*Ye have no life in you.*" As natural men they were dead in God's sight through the power of original sin, and while those under the Old Covenant did enjoy a certain standing with God, that imperfect economy could not give them "life in themselves." And to-day millons have a certain standing with God through faith in the fact that "Jesus died for them." But faith in that fact does not give them "life in themselves." It is possible to receive the grace of God and to receive it in vain so far as the high calling

is concerned. It is only he who "loses his life" by dying with Christ who can "keep it unto life eternal."

These consecrated believers can fully appreciate what the Apostle says in Rom. vi, 3:—"Know ye not that *so many of us* as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death. Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death." For while Paul was writing "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints," yet he knew well enough that not all of those to whom he wrote had taken that step of full consecration to the will of God which alone could justify God in baptising the believer into Christ. All to whom Paul wrote were God's people, for he wrote to a church whose "faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." He nevertheless divided that church of true believers into two classes—all those who had been taken by God and baptised into Christ, and all the others who had not yet experienced such a baptism. (See also Gal. iii, 27, as another instance of the same striking division of God's people.)

"So many of us" have been baptised into Christ. So many of us, while truly believers in Christ, have never experienced such a baptism. And why not? Since it is manifest that only God could thus baptise the believer, why should God thus discriminate between believers? Undoubtedly because only "so many of us" have accepted and complied with the conditions He has laid down. These conditions are thus expressed in Rom. xii, 1-2:—"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable

unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." And until we do "present our bodies a living sacrifice" we can have no practical comprehension of what our Lord means when He says :—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he *cannot* be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, *cannot* be my disciple. . . . So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he *cannot* be my disciple." (Luke xiv, 26-33.)

He may, of course, become a believer in a nominal sense without undergoing such heart-searching experiences, but he cannot become a "*disciple*," because his heart has refused to accept the necessary "*discipline*."

The Christian life, therefore, in the sense that Jesus lived it, and the Apostles understood it, is really impossible to any but those who have faith to trust God straight through, and who have learned to "pray without ceasing." Only those who so love their Saviour that they are willing to count all things as but loss and dross that they might win Christ, and who, when called upon to suffer the loss of all that this life holds dear, are still able to count all these trials as but light afflictions which are but for a moment, and not worthy to be compared to the eternal weight of glory which is yet to be revealed in them, can hope to meet successfully the tests which

must be applied before they can be acclaimed as having been found worthy of joint-heirship with Christ in His Kingdom.

These footstep followers of Jesus are earnest and active in ascertaining and doing the will of God. They study His Word and cultivate the Spirit-filled life. They find in God's Word both warnings and encouragements. They hear their Lord saying to them :—" I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away : and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . . . Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches : he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.

" As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." (John xv.)

These words of our Lord should be carefully pondered, as they clearly show that for the branches in the True Vine there are *grave* possibilities as well

as *great* possibilities : and further, that the one and only thing which can secure our continuance in the True Vine is the production of the fruit which pleases the Husbandman. And not only so, but that fruit-bearing is only possible when we are actively keeping His commandments. Our Lord, the Head of God's Anointed, was able to do so perfectly : our imperfection cannot be rendered as a valid excuse against our *daily endeavour* to do so. Paul, although imperfect, and in his own eyes the chief of sinners, could also say, "I can do all things through Christ, Who strengthens me." The grace of God which was sufficient for him is sufficient for us : the divine strength which was made perfect in his weakness can be made perfect in our weakness; but to thus realise the grace and power of God we must maintain that humility of mind which can even glory in one's own personal infirmities, if so be the power of Christ is the more manifested in and through us. To ignore large portions of God's Word on the senseless plea that "once saved, we never can be lost" is surely to be blinded by the darkest delusion ever foisted by the evil one upon God's thoughtless people.

God's judgment on Christ's members must be based on exactly the same principles as were applied to their Head. In order to become the Greatest of all He had to become the Servant of all. We are invited to become "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; to sit with Him upon thrones, judging and blessing the whole world. To prove our worthiness of being exalted to such a position of glory and power we must daily mainfest the fixed principles

of God in our desire to bless our fellow-creatures here and now. And this we shall most effectually do, not by planning out some fancy scheme of our own, but by taking heed to God's Word, and by following the example of all those who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises.

And to thus effectually co-labour with God it is essential that we should know the various features of God's Plan as they are revealed in His Word, and the "times and seasons He has appointed." Wordly-minded or slothful believers who take no interest in God's Word, or in the "times and seasons He has appointed" only place themselves in a pitiable condition of helpless ignorance, which would be laughable were it not so serious. Their "reward" will be a few wholesome "stripes." (Luke xii, 47-48.) For "every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (I Cor. iii, 13-17.)

The "tares" bear a remarkable resemblance to the "wheat" until the ears of wheat begin to fill up and ripen for their appointed end. And the more the ear of wheat ripens, the more it droops. It lives not for self, but to graciously supply to others

that which can meet a felt need. The "tares" stand haughtily erect, for there is never any weight in the ear to make it droop. And what matter is formed is obnoxious, and only fit for "burning." "And so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels—messengers—and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt. xiii, 40-43.)

The Hidden Cross.

The multitude saw but the cross of olive-wood
The Man of Sorrows bore, nor knew how underneath,
Close-pressed upon His heart, a hidden cross He wore—
A dark and bleeding weight of sin and human woe,
Made heavier with the sentence of God's broken law,
And crowned with thorns of scornful and malicious hate—
A cross the world's Redeemer found on Jordan's Brink,
Nor laid it down until He came to Calvary.

Oftimes it seemed He almost craved some human aid,
Some sympathizing heart to share that cruel cross.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, hadst thou but known
What time that cross bore heaviest on the yearning heart

Of Him, thy King!—And yet, O, slow of faith and hard
Of heart, "Ye would not"—and the King passed on His way;
And of the people, there was none with Him, He trod
Alone the winepress of this dark world's shame and woe!

O, chosen three, had ye but watched with Him "one hour,"
That awful night in dark Gethsemane, ye might
Have lightened some the cruel weight of that dread cross,
Have known and shared with Him that agonizing woe—
Alas! Alas! Your eyes were heavy, and ye slept.
So now, "sleep on and take your rest," ye weary ones,
A holy angel's wing hath eased the hidden cross—
Your Master, strengthened, waits that other cross to bear!

Which cross bore heavier on the way to Calvary—
The cross the cruel Roman soldiers laid upon
That Blessed One? Ah! no, it was the *unseen cross*
That crushed Him to the earth, that wrung from those pale lips
The agonizing cry, "My God, My God, oh, why
Hast Thou forsaken Me?" In grief Earth rent her breast,
The sun grew dark. *'Tis finished,* and the price is paid—
The hidden cross had pierced that loving, tender heart!

"Take up thy cross and follow Me," the Master said.
Ah, yes, His faithful Bride must also bear a cross—
The hidden cross, made not of life's vicissitudes
Alone, its ills and pain, its loss and poverty—
The outward signs the multitude behold;
Ah! no, we follow in His steps, who went before
Us in the narrow way. We, too, must bear the woe,
Be touched with feeling of the world's infirmity—
Its weary weight of sin and curse of broken law.
Let us, therefore, go forth to Him, "without the gate,"
Lay down our lives in sacrifice, spend and be spent,
And, while we clasp this cross more closely to our breast,
Press on toward Calvary, for there our Bridegroom waits
To take the cross of woe, and give the Crown of Joy!

—*Mrs. G. W. Seibert.*

Chapter VII.

God's Judgment on the Justified Believer.

John the Baptist was one of the greatest of men, and a worthy forerunner of his Lord, but this very greatness made his Lord all the more difficult for him to understand when Jesus began to deal with human sin and weak sinners. To John, sin was an abhorrence, and it had become the more so because of his years of lonely communion with God, and the keen realisation that he himself was sin-stained. Born under the tuition of the law of God, and with a clear, honest mind, sin became to him the terrible enemy that required drastic treatment; and John, naturally of an ascetic temperament, was quite prepared to give it that drastic treatment.

He was therefore well fitted to begin a great revival by his calling the people to repentance and to put away their sin. Such a message as his, which dealt with fundamentals, naturally implied antagonism and opposed to sin on the part of all those who professed to receive his teaching. The immersion in water was simply the outward symbol of the soul's determination to live a new life, and to bring it into harmony with the will of God. No

man was ever better fitted to tell the people how far they had drifted from their covenant obligations, and to give them a fiery exhortation to come back into harmony with the will of God. His mission was, comparatively speaking, a failure, as all such missions must be which depend upon the sinner's pious resolutions and personal efforts for the putting away of sin. But in the more earnest and honest of the Israelites it had sown the seed which was to spring into life under the ministry of Jesus, and especially after Pentecost.

When Jesus began His ministry, while His general message was the same as that of John, namely, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," yet His method of dealing with sinners was quite different from that of His forerunner. Instead of laying down a new set of rules and regulations for the guidance of sinful men, which the best of sinful men had been doing from time immemorial, our Lord began with a new formula altogether. Instead of exhorting the sinner to strive still more earnestly to live a better life He said to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee; go in peace." "Sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee."

We need not wonder that such a message caused amazement to men born under the rigorous demands of the Law. As it was more revolutionary than any message that had ever come to the Jews, we need feel no surprise that it took godly and pious men some time to get their bearings. They at first would have a difficulty in seeing that if Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the "Sent of God," in order to deal effectively with sinful men, He could give them no

other message. Of what value were all the exhortations to right doing when men were up against the impenetrable wall of their own sinful hearts? The Lord knew this and the folly of continuing to demand from the sinner what the sinner could never render.

He therefore began His ministry by calling attention to the love of God: that He was the Son of God Who had come to give His life a ransom for many, and was therefore prepared to extend to all who desired it a free pardon. And the Magdalene, enchained to the earth with the burden of sin and her utter inability to expel the demons within her, now found peace and rest and a new life and a great glow of love for her Deliverer. And her experience is the typical experience of every sinner who has been savingly converted.

The Israelites under the Law demonstrated beyond all cavil that no man could save himself by the works of the Law. And as the utter hopelessness of salvation by such a method became the more manifest it but compelled the sinner to look the more earnestly for some other way. And the inability of man having been fully exhibited God now provided that other way. And that way was not only a perfect way, it was the only possible way.

When Jesus said "I am the Way," He but uttered the simple truth. He is the only way of access to the Father, and that in virtue of the ransom price which He presented to Justice in the sacrifice of Himself. From that time when His offering of Himself had been accepted by God in the anointing and begetting power of the Holy Spirit, He could

say to every sinner, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," because He was then in the very act of completing the sacrifice which could fully meet the needs of every sinner: and had the Jews been more alive to the solemn fact that they were all sinners in the sight of God, and of the utter inability of the blood of bulls and goats to take away their sin, they would have been more alive to the fact which both they and their fellowmen must yet learn—that before they can be saved from their sins God in His love must provide for them both Priest and Sacrificial Victim.

The Mosaic arrangement was therefore designed by God to bring sins to remembrance, and thus make sin so obnoxious to sinful men that the Law would thus become to all under it a capable servant to lead men to Christ. And He, in virtue of that perfect sacrifice which He has made on their behalf, could not only extend to all men a free pardon, but could also begin to deal effectively with the pardoned sinner wth a view to his perfecting in holiness.

Justification by faith was designed by the Giver not to be an end in itself, but rather as a means to an end. In the Epistle to the Romans we have a treatise on the Christian religion. Now if Justification by faith were indeed the great end that God has in view Paul might well have closed his epistle when he came to chapter v. For, having traced the utterly lost condition of the Gentile world and then the total failure of the Jews to meet the demands of their law, he next shows that the whole world could have access to God by the Way He has appointed. The Apostle thus reasons out the matter:—"Now

we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a Mercy-seat through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, at this time, His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii, 19-26.)

Having thus clearly traced the great fundamental facts of the Gospel, the Apostle, in order to convince his Jewish readers, refers to the example of Abraham, that even *he* was justified by his faith and not by his works; and he thus concludes his argument:—"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But peace with God, while rightly esteemed by God's people as a great blessing, was not designed to be an end in itself. The blessing of peace with God has been graciously given in order that the justified believer might then acceptably *serve God. For service* is the great end of life, and God's purpose in extending to all believers a free pardon is that they might then co-operate with God in the outworking of His purposes. These purposes are set forth in His Word.

It is because God has provided this sure means of reconciliation so satisfactory to Himself that "He now commands all men, everywhere, to repent," in order that all men might have the privilege and the pleasure of co-operating with God in the work He is now doing. God has given to us who believe this service of reconciliation, because until all men have been brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth the service of reconciliation must, in the very nature of things, be one of the most important services which we could render to God and our fellowmen.

Not that our poor service could enrich God. On that point our Lord's injunction is :—"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unprofitable servants : we have done that which was our duty to do'." (Luke xvii, 10.) We never can repay God for all His loving-kindness to us; and those who rightly estimate the littleness of man will have but little faith in the senseless theory that a "saint" who has been "canonised" (?) by frail mortals has some *merit* which *he* can bestow upon his fellow-mortals. For all true saints would be the

first to acknowledge the truth of our Lord's words, and if they were *un*profitable servants, how could they have "merit"?

If a servant is unprofitable, he can only be kept on at a steady loss to his employer: in which case only an employer of unlimited means could keep servants of that quality. And if we were to regard God only as an "Employer" of all His intelligent creatures, the truth of such a proposition would be readily seen. Not one of His creatures, from Gabriel downwards, could make or secure for himself those eternal conditions which would make life worth living. Everyone, from the highest to the lowest, would everlastingly be indebted to God, and all the service which we could render could never liquidate that debt.

Our Lord brings this point very vividly before us in the parable of the two servants, one of whom owed his employer ten thousand talents, but, being unable to meet the debt, pleaded for time, and was forgiven the whole debt. Afterwards this servant met a fellow-servant who owed him the small sum of one hundred pence, and demanded immediate payment. As this debtor also found it impossible to pay, he also pleaded for time, but was ungraciously refused, and cast into prison. Whereupon the employer, moved with indignation at such heartless conduct, now turned over his servant to the tormenters until the debt should be paid.

The point is, of course, that the servant who owed ten thousand talents represents man in his indebtedness to God, and owes Him a debt which never could be paid, no matter how long God waited. The

second servant is brought in, with his trifling debt of one hundred pence, in order to show that man's indebtedness to man, while not always payable at the moment, may be met in the course of years. Thus it is that the debt which we naturally owe to our parents from birth to manhood may to some extent be discharged by their dependence upon us in the frailty of old age. Man's debt to man is therefore payable, but never man's debt to God, and every child of Adam must begin to deal with God on that assumption. If we are honest with ourselves we soon learn that in all our dealings with God we must work on that assumption forever. Even our Lord Himself showed His entire dependence on God when He said :—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do : for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth : and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." (John v, 19-20.) Our Lord laid hold upon the mighty power of God by a living faith, and in John xiv, 12, He gave us the great promise, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father." We are reminded of the humble spirit of the pious astronomer who, after a patient and careful investigation into the form of a certain ellipse, when at last his efforts were crowned with success, bowed his head reverently while he murmured, "I thank Thee, my God, that I am thinking Thy thoughts after Thee."

The parable of the two debtors also clearly shows us that if we would retain our position as a member of the Household of God we must ever act in our dealings with others on the basis of the same principles which have been applied to ourselves. Our Lord not only taught us to pray "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," but He also said in the same connection :—"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you : but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. vi, 12-15.) For just as God could begin to deal with his feeble and helpless creatures on no other basis than that of the forgiveness of sins, so, if we ever were to become worthy children of such a Father, He could lay down no other rule for us. Thus it is that the forgiveness of sins, based upon confession and request, must become the governing factor in the salvation of men : and that not only in the removal of the guilt of sin, but also in the transformation of character which should always accompany and flow from that primary phase of salvation.

For God can find no pleasure in our selfishness and imperfections, and the great question comes to be, "How can such selfish hearts be restored to the image of God?" Both Scripture and experience teach us that if the first item in the programme of salvation is the forgiveness of sin, the second must be our obedience to the revealed will of God. And God has provided those means of grace whereby we may ascertain and gradually acquire an accurate knowledge of His will. *Our neglect* of those means

of grace for the acquisition of knowledge does not absolve us from all responsibility. The lazy servant was punished by having his talent taken from him, and being cast into outer darkness. It is from God's Own Word that we may acquire an accurate knowledge of His true character and of His gracious purposes concerning sinful men, for He hath committed unto us who believe the service of reconciliation. (II Cor., v, 18.)

It may be that the vast majority of those who believe have so little of the spirit of whole-hearted devotion to the will of God, or so little gratitude, or so little vital faith, that they would be quite unsuitable material for baptism into Christ, and membership in His royal priesthood; but even so, we are not thereby exonerated from our duty of daily serving God. Every justified believer should realise that he has been set free from the guilt of sin in order that thus he may serve God in newness of spirit. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever, and such an ideal can only be realised in a life of loving service. Where the heart is earnest the Lord will indicate how and where our services can best be rendered to His glory and the good of our fellowmen. Even the cup of cold water will not be forgotten, and the "inasmuch" of Matt. xxv, 40, should be the strong incentive to all to do their utmost to thus win the Lord's approval.

Love can only be repaid in its own coin; and since God loves all men, the only life that could really please Him would be the life of loving service which flowed from a grateful heart. To evade the issue is impossible. Love cannot be evaded. God will

therefore press his attentions upon every soul, now or in the future, until all men are naturally divided into two distinct classes—those who, loving and serving God, have become like Him in all things, and worthy children of such a Father; or, on the other hand, selfishly appropriating all His blessings, live only for self until their hearts become crystallised in selfishness, and they are adjudged as being, in every sense of the term, worthy children of their father the devil. (Matt. xxv, 41-46.)

Our Lord's injunction to all men is contained in Luke xvi, 9, as follows :—"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon (riches, wealth) of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." It should be self-evident to every sinner that the only real riches which he possesses in this present life is the great favour of "justification by faith." It should also be self-evident that the only ones who can prepare for him an everlasting habitation when the present life shall fail are our Father in heaven, and His Son, our Saviour. Every justified soul can make these two his eternal Friends by using his justified life as God designed when bestowing the gift, namely, in a life of loving service for God and His people. By thus losing his life in laying it down for the brethren, he keeps it unto life eternal, because he has given to the Bestower of the gift the best practical proof that he did not receive the favour of justification in vain. (II Cor. vi, 1.) To some extent at least, the believer has utilised the grace of God in the formation of a character well-pleasing to God, and which can be promoted to still greater

service when the kingdom shall be set up. For, as our Lord reminds us in Luke xvi, 10-12 :—" He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much : and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon (in thus failing to use aright the grace of God which made you a rich man), who will commit to your trust the true riches (of glory in the coming kingdom)? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's (the gift of the Man Christ Jesus), who shall give you that which is your own (that righteous character which ought to be developed in every man who has received the grace of God, and which alone can fit the justified believer for a position of honourable service in the coming kingdom of God)? For he who would become great in the sight of God must become the servant of all. (Matt. xxiii, 11.)

"Amid the pompous crowd
Of rich adorers, came a humble form;
A widow, meek as poverty doth make
Her children : with a look of sad content
Her mite within the treasure-heap she cast :
Then, timidly as bashful twilight, stole
From out the Temple. But her lowly gift
Was witnessed by an eye, whose mercy views
In motive, all that consecrates a deed
To goodness : So He blessed the widow's mite,
Beyond the gifts abounding wealth bestowed.—
Thus is it, Lord, with Thee : the heart is Thine,
And all the world of hidden action there
Works in thy sight like waves beneath the sun,

Conspicuous! and a thousand nameless acts
That lurk in lovely secrecy, and die
Unnoticed, like the trodden flowers which fall
Beneath a proud man's foot, to Thee are known.
And written with a sunbeam in the Book
Of Life, where mercy fills the brightest page."

—From "The Messiah," by R. Montgomery.

Chapter VIII.

The Lord's Second Presence.

Revealed in Flaming Fire.

The great hope set before God's people in the New Testament is the prospect of their Lord's return to earth again, in order that then He may establish God's Kingdom firmly over the whole earth, and also bring to an end the present trials and sufferings of His faithful people. And not only so, but that then they might realise the fruition of all their hopes to be "caught up together to meet the Lord in the air" when they would be forever with Him, and, united to Him, would sit upon thrones, judging and blessing the whole world of mankind. (Gal. iii, 29, Rev. xx, 4.)

And this hope, sincerely held, has enabled God's faithful servants to meet successfully the most cruel persecutions, and the most painful methods of torture which human ingenuity could devise. Generally speaking, those who hold false doctrines become more or less like the doctrines they hold, and thus it was that those who honestly believed in the doctrines of everlasting torment and Purgatory, became

in their characters like the character of the God whom they held up to popular admiration. For if God were really going to torment the "heretic" for ever and ever because of his "heresy," then a few hours more or less of the same torment would make little difference to the "heretic." Indeed, the prospect of suffering a few hours of torment here might even lead the "heretic" to recant, and so—wonderful grace of the "Holy Mother Church"—might save the poor heretic from the everlasting doom provided for him by "the Judge of all the earth."

On the face of it, it seems strange that an All-wise God should have placed Himself in such an odious position before His creatures. To provide nothing better than everlasting torment for multitudes of ignorant and senseless creatures, unless they are happily brought to believe in certain dogmas before they expire—such is the creed of thousands who claim to be God's people. Of one thing I am dead certain, not one of those who believe in the doctrine would wish to have the same stigma attached to their own names, and would resent it if they were charged with tormenting their children day and night.

The difficulty has been, and still is, that while such expressions are found in the Word of God, they have been, and still are, almost always misunderstood. And the general failure among God's people to believe what God has told them respecting His gracious provision for all the non-elect has greatly added to the misunderstanding. They fail to see that if selfish and ungodly people were taken to heaven, it would be a very purgatory and a place

of torment to them. They could never be happy in such a place, and would want to get out of it as quickly as possible. Even so in the coming Kingdom of God, when the King of Love shall bring "the days of heaven upon the earth," it will certainly bring much suffering—and prolonged suffering—to a vast number of people. And it could bring nothing else, for "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And in the coming "harvest" every man will be amazed at the heavy "crop"—full measure, pressed down, and running over—which the Lord of all will give to every man, for the deeds done in the body.

God's faithful servants suffered because they studied God's word and devoted their lives to the teaching and circulation of the truths which the Bible reveals. Satan, the god of this world, hates the Word of God, and if he cannot confuse, pervert, or suppress it, he will almost certainly stir up persecution against those who teach its pure doctrines. Thus it has always been, and thus it ever will be until the Lord comes in power, binds His evil-minded enemy, and causes the knowledge of the Lord to cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep. God's people, then, have had the very best reasons for longing for their Lord's return, because He, as the Judge of all the earth, would then surely vindicate their characters before the whole world. Then, but not till then, would all lies and false doctrines be forever swept away, and the enemies of the Truth be covered with shame and confusion.

The first Epistle of Peter is a strong exhortation

to God's people to be steadfast in their faith during a period of intense persecution. He writes :—"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you : but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are made partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (I Pet. iv, 12-13.)

These fiery trials have been the portion of God's faithful people all down the Gospel Age, but the Scriptures indicate that following our Lord's return, and during the early part of His Second Presence, there is to be a terrible climax of fiery judgment which not only will involve all of God's true and faithful people, but will include all those who *claim* to be His people; and that ultimately it will embrace all the civil and religious systems on the earth—the entire "Christian World."

Thus the prophet Malachi asks :—"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap : and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii, 2-3.)

The foregoing prophecy shows the severity of the judgment which will be applied to the Lord's true-hearted people. In Isa. xxxiii, 13-19, we are shown how it will apply to the sinners and hypocrites in Zion, and the fear and trembling which it will produce. God, through His servant, says :—"Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that

are near, acknowledge My might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burnings?"

Now the query of these sinners and hypocrites is not in regard as to whether they or others are to be consigned to "everlasting torment." The "devouring fire" and "everlasting burnings" are not literal, but symbolic. They result from our Lord's Second Presence and His fulfilment of the third chapter of Peter's second Epistle. Says the Apostle :—"The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

It is to be observed that in both verses the Apostle first mentions the "heavens" as being destroyed by fire : it is surely self-evident that these "heavens" cannot be the Heaven which is God's throne. The Scriptures clearly suggest that the "heavens" which are to be destroyed by fire are the present-day ruling powers, especially the religious and ecclesiastical ruling powers. It is because these "heavens" are to be consumed in fiery judgments that the sinners and hypocrites in nominal Zion become afraid. And well they may, for, as the Apostle exhorts :—"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to

be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

The "sinners and hypocrites" in Zion are afraid when the "day comes upon them like a thief." They had made no preparation for such a day. They neither "looked for" it, nor did they "hasten unto" it. But their indifference and ignorance did not hinder it from coming. It comes. And when it comes it will distinguish between the "hypocrites and sinners" on the one hand, who will be unable to dwell in the devouring fire; and those who, on the other hand, will be able to dwell in the everlasting burnings.

The prophet Isaiah draws a fine pen-picture of the man who will be able to dwell with the everlasting burnings, as follows:—"He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." Such a man can dwell with the devouring fire, because, like the three Hebrew children, his *character* has been made strong against every form of evil. He thus can calmly face the devouring fire, because he knows that God can bring him through. He knows that God will yet fulfil in him the prophecy, viz.:—"He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."

Now, the promise held out of "seeing the King in His beauty" would clearly apply to the Lord's Second Presence, and to the fact that then He will be "revealed in flaming fire." When Nebuchadnezzar saw "four men walking in the midst of the fire," and the "form of the fourth like unto a son of the gods," it was to him a grave reason for apprehension and terror, as he saw the possibility of the vengeance of heaven falling upon himself in thus dealing with God's servants. But how sweet and precious must have been such a Presence to the three Hebrews! They surely saw "the King in his beauty"—a king indeed, who thus enabled them to walk unscathed in a sea of fire.

And we may well believe that the Apostles were to a large extent guided in their prophetic utterances by such passages from the Old Testament. And with them as our guides we are enabled to understand that this fiery, consuming judgment during our Lord's Second Presence is for the very purpose of demonstrating who are righteous and who are not : and further, that the judgment-process will be sufficiently severe and prolonged to make the Lord's final verdict perfectly clear to all men.

It is also to be borne in mind that by giving to such passages a symbolical meaning we greatly intensify their depth of meaning. We are brought face to face with a searching judgment applied by our Lord Himself which no human being will be able to escape. The literal fires which were applied by the Inquisitors to the bodies of those saints whom they were pleased to call "heretics" could only reduce their bodies to ashes. But the fires of the

Day of Judgment, while unsuitable for reducing human bodies to ashes, will reduce many other things to ashes. For one thing, long before the thousand-year Day of Judgment is over, all religious hypocrisy will be completely reduced to ashes. And the long-continued process of reduction will be exceedingly painful to the hypocrites, involving infinitely more suffering than was felt by the martyrs during the brief periods when their bodies were reduced to ashes. And that because hypocrisy seems to become rooted and grounded in the very inner fibres of the being. The hypocrite always places before the Judge the real difficulty of destroying the hypocrisy, without at the same time destroying the hypocrite himself.

And as with "hypocrites," so will it be with the other "sinners in Zion." The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, reminds us "that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

"For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do

these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." (II Tim. iii.)

Now, the Apostle is not suggesting that all these evil qualities would be exhibited in any one individual, or church, or system. Rather, he is setting forth what may well be termed a catalogue of modern tendencies, and warning "son Timothy" to turn away from them. There would be no necessity to exhort God's people to "turn away" from these things if they were not to be found among God's people in the various churches. They are, indeed, to be discerned on all hands, both inside and outside the churches, and their presence inside the churches is largely due to the false alternatives—heaven or everlasting torment—which are placed before the unconverted, and the natural tendency to attract young people to the churches by promising them everything in the world that is not positively sinful. The Church was formed by its Founder in order to be a help to all those who desired to lead a holy and blameless life; but to-day, owing to the prevailing tendency, and the lack of any rigid principles which could be applied as a means of purification, to a plain, honest man not trained in the ways of hypocrisy, the nominal church seems full of hypocrites. The disease, indeed, is so widespread that anyone not yet smitten is generally regarded as a kind of religious crank, and a troubler of the peace. With her great array of Modernist preachers; her Higher Critics and their remarkable literary acumen, which is so able to expose all the faults and fallacies of the Bible (?), and evolutionists to show us all the great advancement we have

made (?), the great nominal church has good reason to feel that she is very rich indeed, has much goods laid up for many years, and has need of nothing. But when her Lord reveals Himself in flaming fire her eyes will surely be opened, and she then to some extent will realise the awful truth of her real condition in the sight of God, that she is indeed "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Would to God that she could even now listen to His voice saying to her heart :—"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcometh (lukewarmness, and all the modern tendencies set forth by Paul) will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." (Rev. iii, 15-22.)

Within the past fifty years, the Lord has been giving repeated "knocks" in order to arouse His slumbering people to the time of their visitation. Very few have heeded what ought to have been plainly discerned—the presence in our midst of such a Visitor. And now we are rapidly approaching a time when "every eye shall see Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev.

i, 7), for very soon, as many of God's people believe, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." (II Thes. i, 7-10.)

Now, from the fact that He is to be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance, it naturally follows that in process of time "every eye shall see Him," for He will take the necessary steps to manifest Himself to all who at present are unable to exercise any true faith in Him. During the Gospel Age He has been clearly "*seen*" by all those who could exercise the requisite faith; even as He sets forth in John vi, 40, namely :—"And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which *seeth* the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise Him up at the last day."

The number of human beings who have thus "*seen*" Jesus of Nazareth to be indeed the Son of God, with all its wonderful and blessed implications, has been, comparatively speaking, very small. Very few have had those "larger other eyes," the "eyes of the heart" which alone could see into the heart of the claim made by Jesus of Nazareth. For the same reason, while a number of God's people believe that we are now living in the last days, and that we have even now entered into the period of the Second Presence of our Lord, it is not, and never will be,

a subject capable of ocular demonstration. And those of God's people who believe and claim that they have "*seen*" the Son of God, but refuse to believe that we are now in the "days of the Son of man," because, forsooth, they have never seen Him with their natural eyesight, may yet hear their Lord saying to them in sharp reproof, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

Has He not accepted us on the basis of faith? We "live by faith," "walk by faith," while our service is a "work of faith." What reason has He now for discarding the operation of such a principle with His Own people, and of rewarding them with the "crown of life" on the basis of physical eyesight? In the coming years, the world of men will indeed discern His presence, as He is gradually revealed to their dulled senses by His taking vengeance on all those who know not (refuse to recognise) God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is briefly summed up in the New Commandment which He gave to His followers, viz., "Love one another as I have loved you," and all those who, in the coming years, refuse to recognise Jesus as the rightful King of earth, and to obey His "New Commandment," will, after a full and fair opportunity, suffer "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Could men be saved from their sins by gentle methods, doubtless our Lord would use such methods. In Rom. xii, 20-21, He has laid down the following instructions for us :—"If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink : for

in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." The implication contained in the command is, of course, that kindness to an enemy acts as a consuming fire on the enmity in his heart, and so transforms the enemy into a friend.

Now, if that were the invariable consequence flowing from the manifestation of Christian love, we might reasonably expect that our Lord would invariably apply the same principle to all those who are still His "enemies through wicked works." But all history bears testimony to the fact that the application of Christian love does not invariably bring forth a Christian response : hence it is that in the coming years men will arouse the "wrath of the *Lamb*"—a pen-picture suggestive of outraged love. If sinners cannot be brought to render a true obedience by the daily outpouring of God's loving-kindness, we may rest assured that they will be when God begins to pour upon them the vials of His wrath. Even as we read in Isa. xxvi, 9 :—"When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

It would certainly be very much more pleasant for themselves if men would learn righteousness by precept and example, but if men persist in their stubborn rebellion to the revealed will of God, then just as surely as there is a righteous Governor of the Universe, so surely may we expect Him to take the necessary steps to enforce universal respect for His righteous laws. God has now commanded all men everywhere to repent, and it is possible for any man, by laying hold upon the grace provided,

to experience the power of God working in him mightily unto all pleasing. Where there is a cool, rebellious disregard of God's revealed will, God's judgments may be very unpleasant. For the Lord reveals Himself in flaming fire in order to put an end to all rebellion. And He will.

The Wrath of God.

The wrath of God is love's severity
In curing sin—the zeal of righteousness
In overcoming wrong—the remedy
Of justice for the world's redress.

The wrath of God is punishment for sin,
In measure unto all transgression due,
Discriminating well and just between
Presumptuous sins and sins of lighter hue.

The wrath of God inflicts no needless pain,
Merely vindictive, or Himself to please;
But aims the ends of mercy to attain,
Uproot the evil, and the good increase.

The wrath of God is a consuming fire,
That burns while there is evil to destroy
Or good to purify; nor can expire
Till all things are relieved from sin's alloy.

The wrath of God is love's parental rod,
The disobedient to chastise, subdue,
And bend submissive to the will of God,
That love may reign when all things are made new.

The wrath of God shall never strike in vain,
Nor cease to strike till sin shall be no more;
Till God His gracious purpose shall attain,
And earth to righteousness and peace restore.

—*F. G. Wilson.*

Chapter IX.

The Punishment of the Wicked.

"Shame and Everlasting Contempt."

The future punishment of the wicked is a subject which has probably engaged the attention of all thoughtful people at some time, and more particularly if they have seen and have keenly felt, glaring instances of cruelty and wrong perpetrated against the ignorant, the innocent and the helpless: when they have seen the wrong-doers escape all human punishment, and, seemingly, divine punishment also. For even apart from a Revelation by God, if a man is able to reason out, from the light of Nature, that there is a righteous and just Ruler of the Universe, he can hardly escape the other conclusion—that such a Supreme Being must have provided a future life for His intelligent creatures, in which the wrongs and injustices of the present life will be rectified to the complete satisfaction of all who love righteousness and truth.

And we can hardly think of the rectification of those wrongs without at the same time contemplating the punishment of those found guilty. And

this very natural anticipation is confirmed and strengthened when we carefully examine what is set forth in the Bible—a book which claims to be a revelation from Him Who is yet to be "the Judge of all the earth." And all who endorse that claim have been very much alive to its teaching on the future punishment of the wicked, but have differed greatly among themselves as to the true answers to the following questions:—I. What is its purpose? Is it corrective and disciplinary, or is it merely penal without any thought or hope of reclaiming the culprits?" II. "What is its nature? Is it moral discipline, touching the heart; or merely physical suffering, touching the body?" III. "What is its extent? Is it eternal, or limited for a time, and by results?"

The differences of opinion have arisen largely because of the varied human outlook on life which naturally exists among God's people: and also because of certain expressions in the Bible which some believe to be symbolical expressions, not to be taken literally, while others have believed them to be the literal truth. The arguments and contentions have also derived much of their force from the prevailing belief that the soul of man is immortal and cannot die. It must therefore suffer in conscious misery for ever. Others have stuck to the Scriptural statement, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," contending that the words "die" and "death," when applied to the soul of man, have exactly the same meanings as when applied to a dog or a cat.

Plato was the great philosopher who made the

theory of the soul's immortality attractive and reasonable. It has now been generally accepted by the civilised world. It should be remembered, however, that Plato's theory was not based on a divine revelation, but was really the philosophic reasonings of a great intellect. He believed that the greatness of man's intellectual powers implied the pre-existence of a spirit-entity which had survived the crisis of birth, and that it would also survive the crisis of death. He was quite ignorant of revealed truth, so we need hardly wonder that his philosophy differs widely from the Word of God, although it is often supposed to be in harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures.

If those who believe in the inherent immortality of the soul had been supporting Paul when he preached his great sermon on Mars Hill before the Athenian philosophers gathered there, they would very soon have seen the utter incompatibility between Paul's Gospel and their beautiful philosophy. These philosophers gave the preacher all courteous attention until he came to the subject of the "Resurrection," when the meeting came to an abrupt termination. They believed the souls of men were alive: Paul believed the souls of men were *dead*, and would, in the future, be *resurrected*. As the two theories were mutually exclusive, to them it was only a waste of time to listen any longer to such a supposed Gospel. This Jewish preacher believed that all the dead were asleep in the dust of the earth. They believed that all the dead were more alive than ever; and very naturally they considered their own philosophy was very much

superior to the peculiar Gospel presented by the Christian Apostle. They had, however, no proof for their theory apart from the manifestations of spiritism (demonism), when they were led to believe that they had got into touch with the spirits of their departed friends. The proofs of the soul's immortality supplied by spiritism seem very adequate to those ignorant of the revealed will of God. To those who seek to be guided by the Bible, spiritism is regarded as one of the most dangerous delusions. And more especially so from the fact that we are now at the end of the age, when all false doctrines are to reach a climax of delusion before the Lord administers a just and fitting retribution. (See Isa. viii, 19-20; Rev. xiii, 13-14; Rev. xix, 20-21.)

Paul, of course, knew his Bible well, with the many and adequate proofs which it supplied that the dead are really dead: and further, that the only hope for the whole world lay in the sacrificial death of Jesus on their behalf—His resurrection, ascension, and intercession, and His coming again to complete and crown the great work He had begun.

Paul also was conversant with the insidious work of the fallen angels (demons), both in Jewry and among the civilised nations of the earth, but naturally had a difficulty in proving to these learned men that the claims made by the spirits were false. When King Saul, who at one time had been well instructed in the Word of God, did not have the sanctified commonsense to see the utter incongruity of such a theory as that the holy prophet Samuel would come up out of the earth at the word of a witch, it would be difficult to prove to men entirely

ignorant of God's Word that the claims made by the spirits were false.

And so it has always been, and so it is to-day. "All men have not faith," and even of those who have faith, comparatively few are prepared to take the Word of God when it comes into direct conflict with the commonly-accepted traditions of men, such as we find in the Creeds and so-called orthodox Church Standards. How few preachers there are who pay any attention to the Scripture from which this chapter takes its sub-title, viz., Daniel xii, 2, which reads :—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

It naturally reminds us of our Lord's words in John v, 28-29, which have been already considered, namely, that "the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth," some to a resurrection of life, and some to a resurrection of judgment.

In the chapters foregoing we have considered the various classes who, during the present and past ages, have, on the basis of a true faith and whole-hearted devotion to the will of God, been brought through a course of special trials and experiences in order to fit them to be God's instruments of mercy and blessing to the groaning creation during our Lord's Millennial reign. The first in order of these is the Bride, the Church which is His Body, who in the resurrection will be given the crown of life—immortality.

The Old Testament worthies will enjoy a "better

resurrection." The implication would seem to be that they will be awakened from the dust of the earth with mental and physical perfection. They will be awakened from the dust perfect men, whose perfect abilities will very rapidly demonstrate their worthiness to be made the "princes in all the earth."

In the seventh chapter of Revelation we are told also of a great company which no man could number, who come up out of the great tribulation, and who wash their defiled robes in the blood of the Lamb. They are granted palms of victory, but not crowns of royalty, and are elevated to a position of serving God *before* the throne, and in His Temple. They seemingly form the antitype of the Levites, who were consecrated to God, and given to the priests to help and serve with them as occasion required. (See I Chron. xxiii.)

All these servants of God enjoy *an awakening to life in a moment.* And their awakening to life in a *moment* is because in each case the character already has been formed by the chastening hand of God; and their resurrection to instantaneous perfection and power fits them immediately for the great task before them of binding Satan, suppressing all evil, and gradually reconciling the whole world to God.

The angel's statement to Daniel has special reference to the Israelites and others who have been brought to a clear understanding of the will of God. It practically ignores the great mass of the ignorant heathen and Gentile world, where the people have lived and died in ignorance of the revealed will of

God. They all will be awakened from the tomb in the same moral condition as they were in when they died. They could not be awakened to life, because, never having enjoyed the grace of God, and never having been brought under His chastening discipline, an awakening to *life* would be a moral impossibility. On the other hand, as the great majority of the heathen and unconverted have lived ordinary lives, and have never done anything worthy of "shame and everlasting contempt," they could not possibly suffer such a punishment. They will, therefore, be awakened in exactly the same moral condition as when they died, and only after they have learned of the grace of God in providing a Saviour Who has ransomed their souls from death will they have the grand opportunity of responding to such a love by giving their hearts to their gracious Redeemer. If they do so, they may then, by His grace and help, travel up the "Highway of Holiness" until they are perfected in holiness, and so be found worthy of everlasting life. If they fail to respond to the love of God, and live only for self, their hearts will naturally crystallise in selfishness until they are adjudged worthy of everlasting death. (Matt. xxv, 31-46.)

A " resurrection of life," then, always implies a moral process leading to a climax : and a " resurrection of judgment " may become to all who take advantage of the grace of God then provided in and through the " *World's Redeemer* " a " resurrection of life." It *may* so become. The Scriptures also reveal that in the case of a vast number the gracious opportunity will be wasted; just as to-day, with a

large number of professing Christians, the grace of God has been received in vain. It has not been used as God designed when bestowing the gift, and made a stepping stone to higher things.

It is because of this exact meaning which the Bible imports into the word "life" that we read in Rev. xx, 5, that "the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished." Although all will be awakened during our Lord's Millennial reign, and at once given the opportunity of traversing the "Highway of Holiness," yet they could not have "life" until the Lord shall surrender the kingdom to God, even the Father: for "the *gift of God* is eternal life" although then, as always, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." And God will give eternal life to all those of the human family then found well pleasing to Him; and He will do so by providing for His human children a perfect human environment in which a perfect human life can be sustained for ever.

Now, it is when we thus view and contemplate God's gracious provision for His lost and sin-stained human family that we begin to see the depth of meaning in the angelic statement that "some shall awaken to shame and everlasting contempt." It will be because of the Millennial conditions which our Lord will gradually create that any other reward than that of "shame and contempt" will become a moral impossibility. For the new ideals which our Lord will gradually create in human society will make wickedness utterly repulsive, and both the sinners and their fellowmen will see such sins in all their naked ugliness. The "shame and contempt"

will be the natural outcome of the fact that earth's future King is inherently holy, just, wise, loving, merciful, gracious, faithful and true, and that He will establish conditions in the earth in harmony with His character : conditions which will tend more and more to make all sin utterly hideous and repulsive—an abomination to men as well as to God, and something which they will verily hate.

Instead of fighting manfully against inherited tendencies, some men and women have gone wholeheartedly into evil, and have delighted not only in committing the grossest sins, but have even taken a fiendish delight in leading astray the young and the innocent—a course of action which the light of nature, apart from the light of religion, shows to be utterly evil.

Could these sinners but visualise the future, they would surely pause and think. The average man is largely controlled in his outward conduct by what his neighbours think and say about him. He can easily see what is meant by a period of shame and contempt, and from that he can visualise a " shame and contempt " which is age-lasting. Indeed, knowing human nature to be what it is, we can well believe that if evil-doers could but visualise that judgment day—a thousand-year day when all the wrongs and evils that have been committed will be uncovered, and a due reward given to every man for the deeds done in the body—that it would be the greatest deterrent to wrong-doing that the world has ever known.

Many are prone to dream of our Lord's Millennial reign as if it were a kind of lovely picnic—one

long, sweet song. It will certainly be a grand time for all those who now suffer for the sake of truth and righteousness; and also for all those who, in the face of great difficulties and discouragements, have sought to live true and honest lives in the sight of God and man. But it will be a most trying time for all those who have secretly practised evil and unrighteousness, and who have thus far escaped the law of man, and who had hoped that they would also escape the law of God.

Nowhere does the Bible suggest that the Day of Judgment will be a day without mercy: rather, its message is, that God's mercy endureth forever. (Psalm cxxxvi.) Nor does the Bible teach that then there will be no forgiveness of sins. Rather, that the Judgment Day is for the cleansing away of sin, and its complete removal from God's "footstool." Every sinner, upon confession of his guilt, may surely obtain forgiveness of sin; for "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." The whole difficulty lies in what follows—when God undertakes to cleanse the sinner from "all unrighteousness." In the very best of men the process at times is somewhat painful, but a great desire to be presented "faultless" enables us daily to accept the will of God without sharp friction. That hope, however, can hardly be extended toward those who have so delighted in selfishness and evil that it has become rooted in the character. In such the cleansing process will be simply awful. Wilful sinners will feel most intensely the righteous decisions of the Judge, and will have a real difficulty in seeing clearly that all His

decisions are for their own correction in righteousness, and perfecting in holiness. The Revelator graphically describes the situation when he says that "the smoke (remembrance) of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." The justice of the penalties imposed will never be forgotten by the human family.

Another thing that men are prone to forget is the fact that the evil that men do live after them, and that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. In the coming judgment we shall behold a correspondency between the wrong committed and the penalty inflicted. All the prophecies relating to the Second Presence of our Lord will but exhibit the inevitable application of the reign of law. Whatsoever the nation soweth, that shall the nation reap. Sow the wind; reap the whirlwind. Sow lawlessness in high places; reap universal anarchy. Sow superstitious doctrines; reap medieval darkness. Sow the love of pleasure; reap a time of want. Sow the love of money; reap "many sorrows." Sow the love of the world; reap a wasting of the soul. Sow disobedience to parents; reap the heart of an outlaw. Sow the fear of God; reap "the beginning of wisdom." Sow a love for man; reap the love of God. And while, as we learn from the parable of the sheep and the goats, that thousand-year judgment day will provide a grand opportunity for sowing, it will be, first of all, a time when every man will gather the harvest of the acts he has sown in the present life. And as they each will be brought face to face with the consequences of all their actions, how could they have anything but shame

and contempt when they and others behold their sinful conduct in all its wretched hideousness? Acts which they might have hoped would be buried forever will now arise before them to exact a full retribution. Men will be absolutely helpless in that new environment created by an all-seeing, all-wise and absolutely just Judge, Who will see to it that no man shall escape the penalty imposed.

And the whole purpose of the penalty is to make men see that sin is a most abominable thing in the sight of God, that so, in learning to abhor it, they may rise to a nobler life. This they could never do in their own strength, nor would they attempt it unless they first were made to realise the repulsiveness of sin, and its invariably bitter consequences. Thus realising, they will be compelled to cry for mercy and help, and the character of the Judge, and the testimony of the Scriptures give us the assurance that their cry will not pass unheeded.

There is no evidence to the effect that during our Lord's reign over the earth when He is judging the world that then His ear will be heavy that it cannot hear. Nor is there any evidence that then His Arm will be unable to save. All the difficulties will lie in the heart of the sinners, and their natural antipathy to righteousness—the want of any real energy in combating the evil and selfishness in their hearts. All those who then can respond to the heart of the Judge, and who take their punishment in the spirit in which it is given, will be able to make it a stepping stone to higher things and a means of grace in the moulding of a character to be fitted for life everlasting. All those who resent the con-

ditions imposed by earth's rightful King, and who persist in thinking only of self, will find their punishment but a preliminary to a still more severe penalty, even "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." (II Thes. i, 9.) Some, who would claim to be faithful to the Word of God, generally suggest that the foregoing punishment means "everlasting *preservation* in the presence of the devil and his angels." God's people may rest assured that the Apostle's words cannot be honestly made to bear such a construction. The punishment imposed on Adam and his children was the sentence of death. The final punishment imposed on all evil-doers will be the "second death." From the first sentence there was a ransom and redemption provided in the death of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. From the final verdict there will be no redemption. Christ dieth no more, and those who suffer the "second death" will "go away into everlasting punishment." Nothing whatever could be gained by "preserving" them, as they are really not worth while preserving. Sensible men only preserve what is valuable, and generally destroy what they consider worthless. Why should God preserve those who not only have become worthless to Him, but absolutely vile and abominable in His sight?

And these evil-doers will not only become vile in the sight of God: they will become so to their fellow-men. Respecting those who at the end of the millennial reign are led away by Satan's deceptions, we are told that "fire came down from God out of heaven, and *devoured* them." Re-

specting the righteous who in that final judgment receive the approval of God, we are told in Isa. lxvi, 24, that " they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men who have transgressed against me : for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an *abhorring* unto all flesh."

We observe, first, that the righteous who are saved go forth and look upon the *carcases* of those who have been destroyed by the fire from heaven; and second, the hopelessness of there ever being any future resurrection for them by the statement that " their worm shall not die." Worms naturally feed on the carcases of the dead, but in the case of all those who lost life through Adam's transgression, the course of the " worm " is stopped by the awakening of all from the dust of the earth. (Dan. xii, 2; John v, 28-29.) But in the case of all those who suffer death at the end of our Lord's reign over the earth, the process of the " worm " will never be stopped. " *Their worm shall not die* " by any future awakening from the dead. Their death is not a " sleep " with the prospect of an " awakening." It will be an " everlasting destruction " from which there will be no redemption.

And as with the " worm " even so is it with the " fire." " Their fire is not quenched." That does not mean that it cannot go out. At the end of every day millions of fires go out of themselves without being quenched. There is no necessity to quench them, because nothing valuable is being burned. We only seek to " quench " a fire when there is a danger of something valuable being destroyed

Why should God quench the fire which is "destroying" the moral rubbish which would disfigure His "footstool?" It would surely be a strange thing for Him to do: moreover, we are assured in His Word that He will not quench it. It will burn until all the moral rubbish has been destroyed, and then, like all other fires to which no fuel is added, it will go out. It also contains the thought, of course, that no human being will be able to quench it, and in that sense it will be "unquenchable." All men will be utterly helpless so far as the "quenching" of the fire is concerned, but those who have the full approval of God will be able to pass through it without fear, and indeed, they will be able to rejoice that it has done its work so thoroughly.

Respecting the nature of the fire of the Day of Judgment, we get a suggestive thought from the fact that after "death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them" that then "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." Now it should be self-evident that the "fire" into which "death" is "cast" cannot be a *literal fire*. Such a Scripture could only be understood in any intelligible sense by the natural inference that the death penalty on Father Adam and his children ceased to operate. Not only so, but also that all those now sleeping in hell have also been liberated: for "hell" delivers up its "dead" as well as "death," and is then cast into the "lake of fire" along with "death." Strictly speaking, of course, hell will have delivered up its dead long before the end of the Millennium, which is in keeping with the Apostle's statement

that " The *last* enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Only after human beings emerge from hell can all the evidences of death be removed from heart, mind and body. And the " evidences of death " could only be removed from the " hearts " of those who respond to the love of God, and who seek to serve Him in love.

This is very vividly brought to our attention in the parable of the sheep and the goats. From it we learn that the " sins of omission " may be the most deadly in the sight of the Judge. The wicked actions of the present life are no longer before the Judge, and we may reasonably infer that the penalties on all such wicked actions have been already inflicted some considerable time before the end of the Day of Judgment. Indeed, that would seem to be an absolute necessity if all men are to be given a fresh trial before God, with the view to ascertaining if they will now love Him and serve Him in spirit and in truth.

During the thousand-year Day of Judgment every man will be suitably rewarded or punished for the deeds done in the body, but during that time another test will also be in process—a testing of the "heart." The Lord's final judgment is not based upon the evil we may have done in the present life, but is based entirely upon the good actions we either have to our credit, or might have had to our credit. The final verdicts read, " Inasmuch as ye did it " or " Inasmuch as ye did it not." The plea of ignorance could not alter the verdict. To be " ignorant " of the clamant needs of our fellowmen may be the greatest sin in the sight of God because of what it

reveals—a heart so selfish that it is utterly incapable of understanding His great love for His lost and sin-stained human family, and His grand and unalterable purpose to "bless all the families of the earth." Even the Jewish nation He "has counted in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon them all." (Rom. xi, 32.) And that being so, it suggests the proper attitude of mind which is to be cultivated by His people. We should rejoice in the ample provision which He has made for the salvation of the whole world. We should rejoice that He has provided a Saviour Who is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." We should rejoice that our Lord now has "the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i, 18), and that He was given the keys in order that He might open the prison doors and let the prisoners out. We should rejoice that "all that are in their graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth." We should rejoice that He has been given the power to punish all evil-doers, and that some will awaken to shame and everlasting contempt. We should rejoice that not only is there a "resurrection of life" in prospect for the faithful servants of God, but that there is also a "resurrection of judgment" in store for the world of mankind. We should rejoice that the Lord's final verdict will be based upon each man's response to the love of God, as that response finds a fit and proper avenue in meeting the needs of his fellow-men. We should rejoice that "the beast" and "the false prophet" and "the devil" are all to be cast into a "lake of fire and brimstone," in order that there they may be "tormented day and night

unto the ages of the ages." We should rejoice that our Lord will make "the place of His feet glorious," and that He will destroy all those found unworthy of everlasting life. We should rejoice that "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." We should rejoice that "then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that did put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

"Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
If not so frequent, would not this be strange?
That 'tis so frequent, *This* is stranger still.
Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears
The palm, 'That all men are about to live,'
For ever on the brink of being born.
All pay themselves the compliment to think
They one day shall not drivel: and their pride
On this reversion takes up ready praise;
At least their own; their *future* selves applauds;
How excellent that life they *ne'er* will lead!
Time lodged in their own hands is *folly's* vails;
That lodged in *fate's* to *wisdom* they consign;
The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone;
'Tis not in folly, not to scorn a fool;
And scarce in human wisdom to do more.
All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage: When young, indeed,
In full content we, sometimes, nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish,

As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.
At thirty man suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve:
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves; and re-resolves; then dies the same.
And why? Because he thinks himself immortal.
All men think all men mortal, but Themselves;
Themselves, when some alarming shock of fate
Strikes through their wounded hearts the sudden dread;
But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
Soon close; where past the shaft, no trace is found.

. . . . . .

"That common, but opprobrious lot! past hours,
If not by guilt, yet wound us by their flight,
If folly bounds our prospect by the grave,
All feeling of futurity benumbed;
All God-like passion for eternals quenched;
All relish of realities expired;
Renounced all correspondence with the skies;
Our freedom chained; quite wingless our desire;
In sense dark-prisoned all that ought to soar:
Prone to the centre; crawling in the dust;
Dismounted every great and glorious aim:
Embruted every faculty divine;
Heart-buried in the rubbish of the world.

. . . . . .

"O treacherous Conscience! while she seems to sleep
On rose and myrtle, lulled with syren song;

While she seems, nodding o'er her charge, to drop
On headlong Appetite the slackened rein,
And give us up to *licence*, unrecalled,
Unmarked :—see, from behind her secret stand,
The sly informer minutes every fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills.
Not the gross act alone employs her pen;
She reconnoitres Fancy's airy band,
A watchful foe! the formidable spy,
List'ning, o'erhears the whispers of our camp:
Our dawning purposes of heart explores,
And steals our embryos of iniquity.
As all-rapacious usurers conceal
Their doomsday-book from all-consuming heirs;
Thus, with indulgence most severe, she treats
Us spendthrifts of inestimable Time;
Unnoted, notes each moment misapplied;
In leaves more durable than leaves of brass
Writes our whole hist'ry, which she yet shall read
In every pale delinquent's private ear,
And Judgment publish.

. . . . . .

"Open mine eye, dread DEITY! to read
The tacit doctrine of Thy works; to see
Things as they are, unaltered through the glass
Of worldly wishes. *Time! Eternity!*
('Tis these, mis-measured, ruin all mankind)
Set them before me; let me lay them both
In equal scale, and learn their various weight.

. . . . . .

"To-day is Yesterday returned; returned
Full-powered to cancel, expiate, raise, adorn,
And reinstate us on the Rock of peace.

Let it not share its predecessor's fate;
Nor, like its elder sisters, die a fool.
Shall it evaporate in fume? Fly off
Fuliginous, and stain us deeper still?
Shall we be poorer for the mercy poured?
More wretched for the clemencies of heaven?

. . . . . .

'My song but echoes what great Nature speaks.
What has she spoken? Thus the goddess spoke,
Thus speaks for ever :—' Place at nature's head
A Sovereign, which o'er all things rolls his eye,
Extends His wing, promulgates His commands,
But, above all, diffuses endless good;
To Whom, for sure redress, the wronged may fly;
The vile, for mercy; and the pained, for peace :
By Whom, the various tenants of these spheres,
Diversify'd in fortunes, place, and powers,
Raised in enjoyment, as in worth they rise,
Arrive at length (if worthy such approach)
At that blest fountain-head, from which they stream :
Where conflict past redoubles present joy;
And present joy looks forward on increase;
And that on more : no period! every step
A double boon! a promise, and a bliss.'

. . . . . .

"Great VINE! On Thee, on Thee the cluster hangs (Jn. xv);
The filial cluster! infinitely spread
In glowing globes, with various being fraught,
And drinks (nectarious draught!) immortal life.
Or, shall I say (for who can say enough?)
A constellation of ten thousand gems,

(And, O! of what dimension! of what weight!)
Set in one Signet, flames on the right hand,
Of Majesty Divine! The blazing Seal,
That deeply stamps, on all created mind,
Indelible, His sovereign attributes,
Omnipotence, and Love! *That*, passing bound:
And *this*, surpassing that. Nor stop we here,
For want of Pow'r in God, but thought in Man.
Ev'n this acknowledged, leaves us still in debt:
If Greater aught, that Greater all is Thine.
Dread SIRE:—Accept this Miniature of Thee;
And pardon an attempt from mortal thought,
In which archangels might have failed,
unblamed."

From "Night Thoughts," by Edward Young, D.D., 1744.